6 Pl

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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Ancient and Preſent State

OF THE

NAVIGATION

OF THE

Port of *KING's-LYN*,

AND OF

CAMBRIDGE,

And the reſt of the Trading-Towns in thoſe Parts: And of the Navigable Rivers that have their Courſe through the Great-Level of the Fens, called BEDFORD Level.

ALSO

The HISTORY of the Ancient and Preſent State of Draining in that Level, in the Province of *Marſhland*, and the Hundreds and Parts adjacent.

FROM

Authentick Records, and Ancient Manuſcripts; and from Obſervations and Surveys carefully made upon the Spot theſe Three Years laſt paſt.

WITH

The Method propos'd for draining the ſaid FENS, and amending the Harbour of *LYN*: By Col. JOHN ARMSTRONG, chief Engineer of *England*.

Illuſtrated with MAPS.

LONDON:

Printed by J. ROBERTS, for the AUTHOR: Sold by CHARLES HARWICK, at *Lyn*; WILL. THURLBOURN, at *Cambridge*; COTOBED EAST, at *Ely*; RICH. STANDFAST, in *Weſtminſter-Hall*. MDCCXXV.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Ancient and Present State

OF THE

NAVIGATION

OF THE

Port of KING's-LYNN,

AND OF

CAMBRIDGE,

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

And the rest of the Navigable Rivers in that Part:
And of the Navigable Rivers and Creeks thro' the
Great Level of the Fens called Bedford Level.

ALSO

The HISTORY of the Ancient and Present State of
Draining in that Level, in the Province of Holland, and the
Hundreds and Parts adjacent.

FROM

Authentick Records, and choice Manuscripts; and from
Observations and Surveys carefully made upon the Spot
these Three Years last past.

WITH

The Method proposed for draining the said Level, and improving the
Harbour of LYNN: By Col. Jonas Ramsey Chief Engineer
to the King of Poland.

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Y.

—— YORK, *Esq*; *Mayor of* Cambridge.

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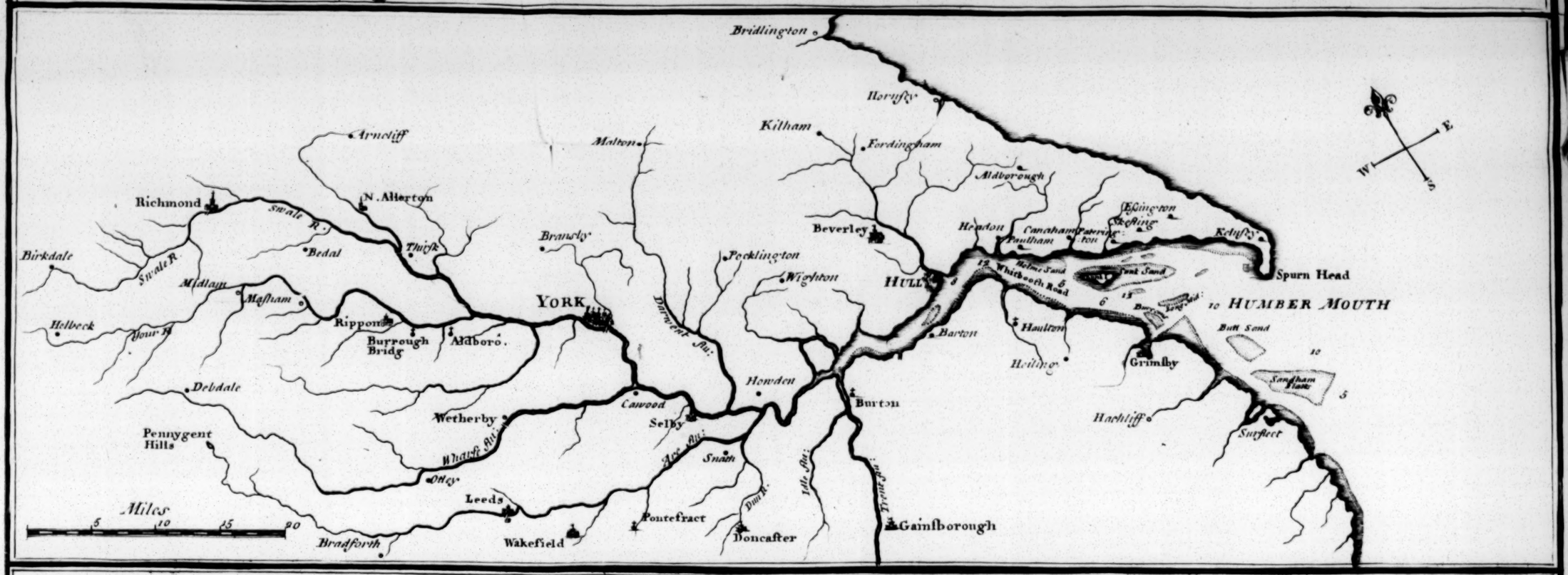
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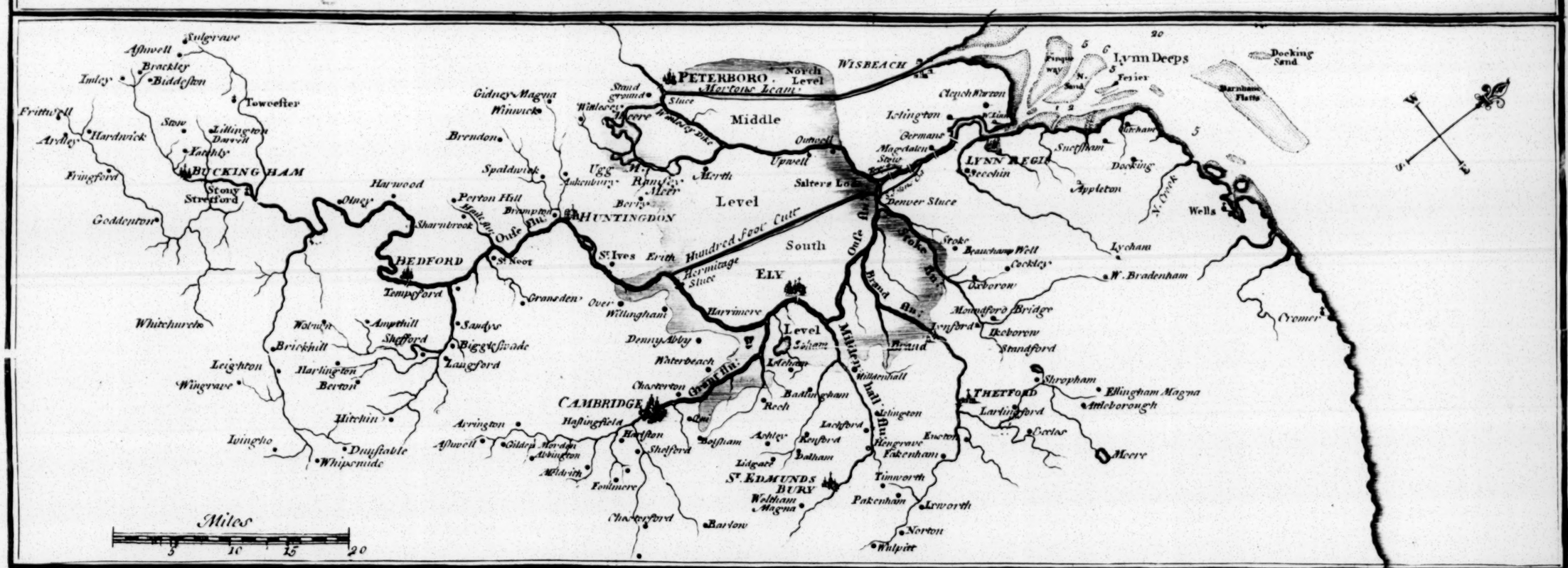
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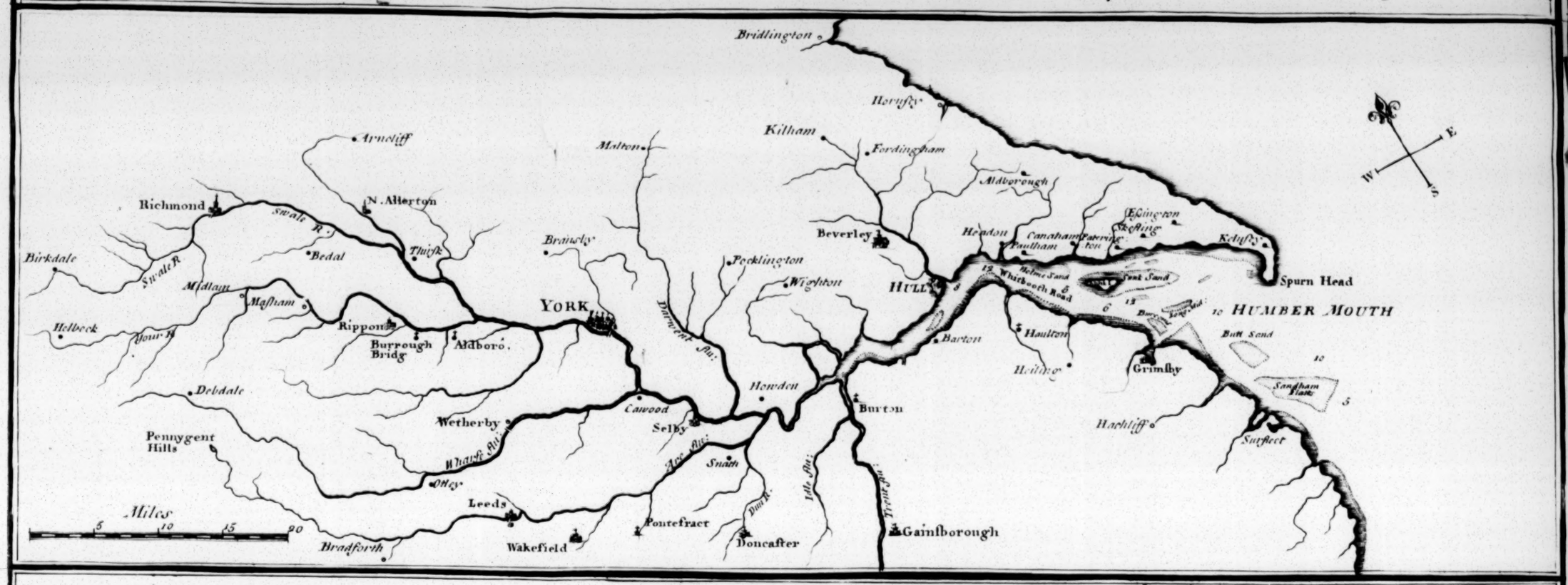
A SURVEY of the HUMBER from its Spring head in YORK-SHIRE, to its Influx into ye SEA below HULL being about 100 Miles.



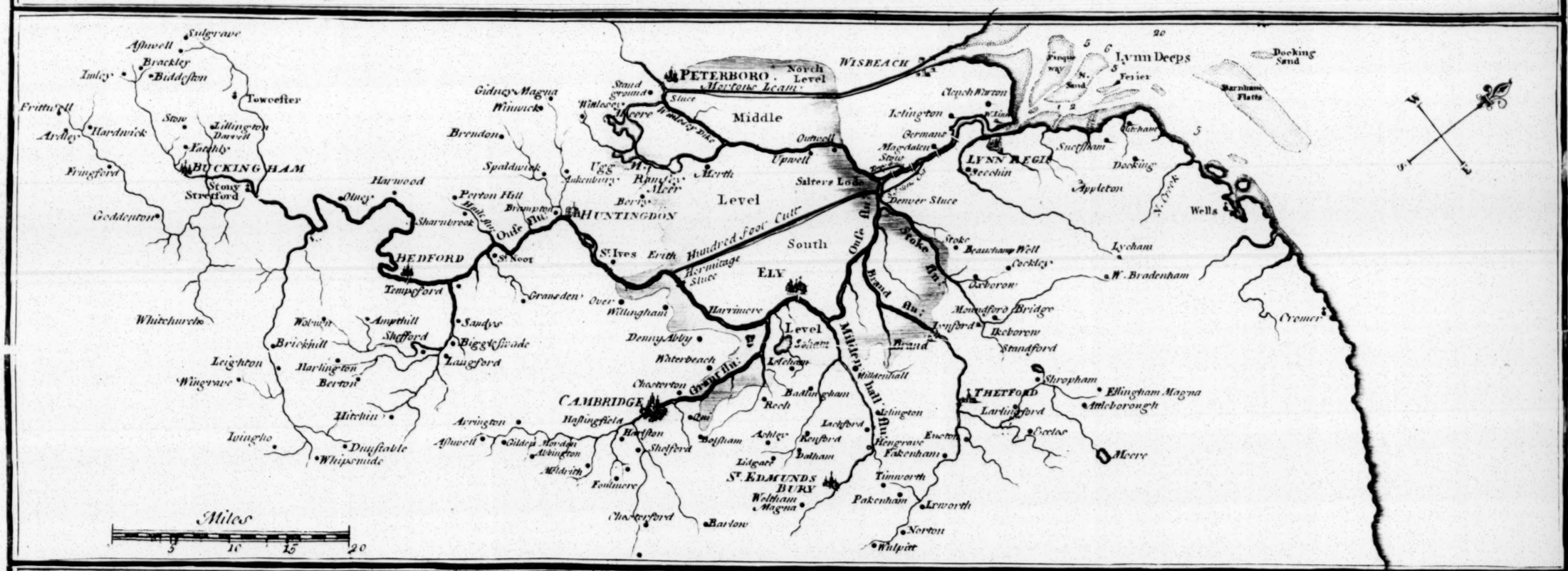
A SURVEY of the OUSE from its Spring head in NORTHAMPTON-SHIRE, to its Influx into the SEA below LYNN being about 160 Miles.


Fulgrave
Aswell
Brackley
Biddesden
Imley
Towcester
Frittwell
Stow
Lillington
Darvell
Ardley
Hardwick
Yardley
BUCKINGHAM
Fringford
Stony Stretford
Geddington
Harwood
Olney
Perton Hill
Sharnbrook
Brampton
Ouse Riv.
Gidney Magna
Winwick
Brendon
Spaldwick
Ugg R.
Ramsey
Merth
Berry
HUNTINGDON
Middle Level
Outwell
Upwell
Salters Lode
Denver Sluice
Wisbeach
PETERBORO.
North Level
Morton's Leam
Stand ground Sluice
Winlosey Meere
Nene Riv.
Lynn Deeps
Docking Sand
Barnham Flatts
Clenchwarton
Islington
Germans
Magdalen
Stow
LYNN REGIS
Seechin
Sutterton
Docking
Appleton
Wells
N. Creek
Lychan
W. Bradenham
Cockley
Stoke
Beauchamp Well
Ouse Riv.
Stoke Riv.
Brand Riv.
Hundred foot Cutt
Hermitage Sluice
ELY
South Level
Harrimere
Denny Abby
Waterbeach
Chesterton
Cam R.
CAMBRIDGE
Leverington
Wisbech Riv.
Badlingham
Rech
Lode
Ashley
Lackford
Renford
Bottisham
Balsham
Lidgate
Hengrave
Euston
Fakenham
Tunworth
Pakenham
Ixworth
Norton
Whelpit
ST. EDMUNDS BURY
Waltham Magna
Chesterford
Barlow
Foulmere
Shelford
Hartston
Hasingfield
Arrington
Aswell
Gilden Morden
Abington
Aldwin
Ivingho
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Hitchin
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Harlington
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Brickhill
Shefford
Biggleswade
Langford
Sandys
Ampthill
Wolrich
Tempsford
Whitchurch
Granesden
Over
Willingham
St Ives
St Neots
Erith
Houghton
Ramsey
Merr
Berry
Offord
Brampton
Hale Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Hunting Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Stoke Riv.
Brand Riv.
Mildrith Riv.
Hallmill Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Cam Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Lark Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Ouse Riv.
Ouse

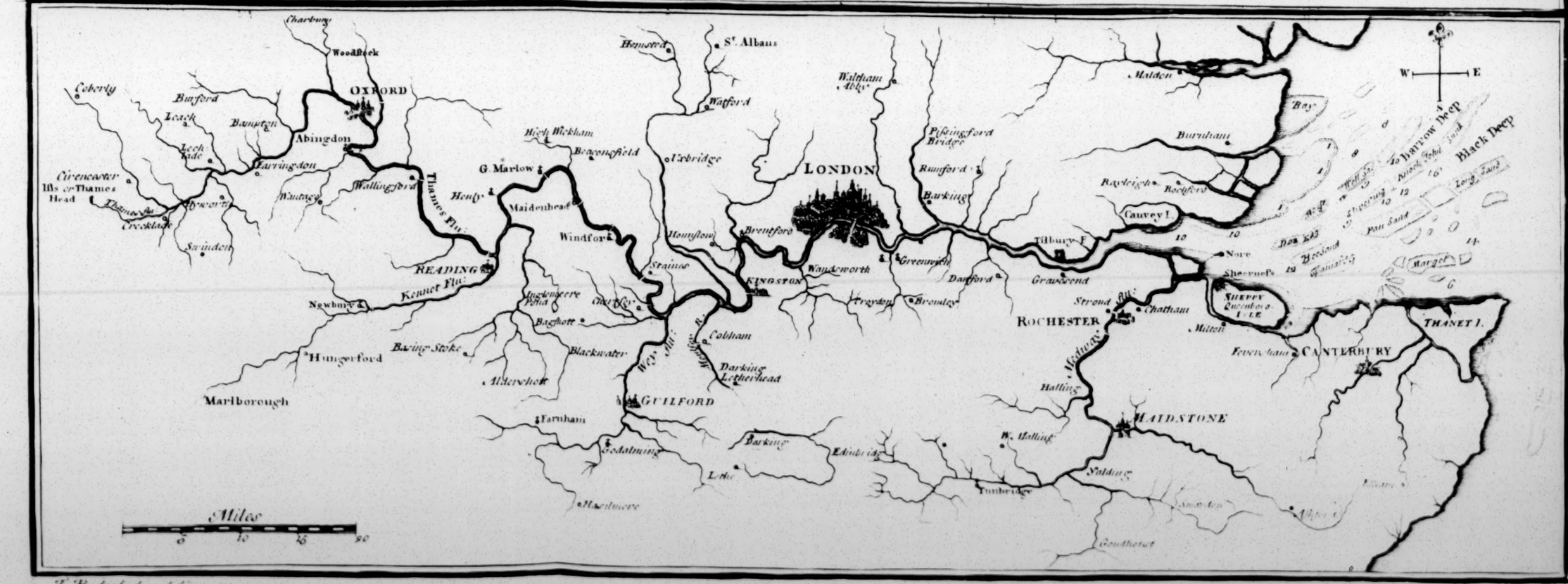
A SURVEY of the HUMBER from its Spring head in YORK-SHIRE, to its Influx into ye SEA below HULL being about 100 Miles.



A SURVEY of the OUSE from its Springhead in NORTHAMPTON-SHIRE, to its Influx into the SEA below LYNN being about 160 Miles.



A SURVEY of the THAMES from its Springhead in GLOCESTER-SHIRE, to its Influx into the SEA at the NORE, being about 170 Miles



T. Badeslade delin

Sect. 1

C. Parker Sculp.



TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *ROBERT WALPOLE*,

Knight of the moſt Honourable Order of the BATH;

Firſt Lord Commiſſioner of the TREASURY;

Chancellor of the *Exchequer*, and Under-Treaſurer;

AND

One of HIS MAJESTY's moſt Honourable PRIVY COUNCIL.

SIR,



WHEN the Corporation of *Lyn* repreſented to You the dreadful Apprehenſions they are under of the total Loſs of their Navigation (caus'd by the choaking up of the *Ouſe* River) and Inſtances of Demonſtration were given, that from the ſame Cauſe the adjacent Country is overflow'd and rendered unprofitable; You was pleas'd to command theſe Papers to be drawn up for their Service. They being now publiſhed at the Deſire of that Body, and Gentlemen of the adjacent Parts, I preſume to introduce them to the World, under the Protection of Your Great Name, perſuaded of Your favourable Acceptance of them, becauſe they tend to the publick Good, and to the Good of that County, (among others) in which Your Honourable Family have for many Centuries flouriſhed: And of that Port and Burgh for which You have many Years been Repreſentative in Parliament.

DEDICATION.

They demonſtrate that the true Intereſt of *Lyn* and the Adventurers, of the Trading Towns, and the adjacent Country, is in this Affair the ſame: That the Navigation of that Port, and Draining in the Great Level of the Fens, are inſeparable: That they have alway gone Hand in Hand, improv'd together, and together decay'd: They point out a Method to drain the Country, and amend *Lyn* Harbour; and from the Experience of all former Ages, prove this Method muſt as neceſſarily anſwer the End propoſed, as any other natural Cauſe produce its proper Effect. It is therefore hoped, they will contribute to engage the Great Bodies concern'd, after Your Illuſtrious Example, to act for the Good of their Poſterity, and of their Country.

As theſe are the glorious Motives that induced You to order theſe Papers to be drawn up, which will alone give them a laſting Reputation; ſo the Publick, who will receive the Benefit, will, I hope, aſſiſt me to acknowledge Part of the Obligation due from me to You, GREAT SIR, for having been pleaſed to truſt me with a Work of this apparent Uſefulneſs and Importance; there being nothing in the World I more ardently deſire, than to give You Proofs of that profound Reſpect with which I am,

SIR,

Your moſt Obedient,



and Devoted Servant,

THO. BADESLADE.

THE PREFACE.

THE Number of Inhabitants, the Value of Land, the Trade, the Riches, and the Strength of every Free-State, are great, in Proportion to their Navigable Rivers.

For as People increaſed, Communities were formed; who took to Manufactures, which began firſt Domeſtick, then Foreign Trade and Commerce: This induced them to ſettle on navigable Rivers, whereby they might with moſt Eaſe and leaſt Expence make their Exports and Imports.

Foreign Trade advanced their Wealth, and the Expectation of Profit increaſed the Number of Inhabitants of ſuch Towns; and with them advanced Husbandry and Feeding, and the Value of Land; the Manufactures alſo flouriſhed with the Manufacturers, and Traffick with Domeſtick and Foreign Neighbours became more and more extended: This introduced Shipping and Seamen, our Wealth in Peace, our Defence in War.

'Tis to Trade and Navigation we are beholden for what Knowledge we have of foreign Parts, and to our Settlements Abroad: And as the Induſtrious Merchants were Emulous of out-doing each other, by getting firſt into a new Place of Trade, our Commerce has by that Means been extended to all Parts of the World; we now Export to all foreign Kingdoms the Manufactures and Products we abound in, and they want, and Import from them Things neceſſary in their ſtead; and by as much as the Produce of the Nation have exceeded our Wants, by ſo much has our Wealth increaſed, the Remainder being ſold for Bullion: And this Riches is diſperſed through the whole Kingdom, by means of our Navigable Rivers: They prevent Money centering in any one Place, which if it was to do, would ruin Trade, and diſable the Country to pay the neceſſary Taxes.

Of all the Navigable Rivers in England, the River of Great Ouſe is one of the chief; which, for the Uſefulneſs of it, an ancient Author calls Via Lactea, quæ merces & aliæ, vitæ neceſſaria infert & defert: Ejuſque in Oſtio, inſter clavis Lenna ſedit: He compares the River Ouſe to the Milky Way, by reaſon of thoſe Accommodations of Merchandize, Food, and neceſſary Proviſions, which are conſtantly carried up and down it: And Lyn ſits at the Door of this River, as it were the Turnkey of it.

The PREFACE.

The Port of Lyn *ſupplies Six Counties wholly, and Three in Part, by means of* Great Ouſe, *and the many other Rivers that branch out of it: Upon theſe Streams ſtand the large populous Towns* — Buckingham — Bedford — Huntington — Ely — Northampton — Peterborough — Mildenhall — Brandon — Thetford — Bury *St.* Edmonds — Cambridge: *All which depend chiefly on the Navigation; and all which the Merchants at* Lyn *ſupply with Maritime Commodities: Their Exports and Imports enrich and furniſh the Country, and raiſe a great Revenue to the Government; and in all National Advantages the Port of* Lyn *is equalled by few Ports of this Kingdom.*

And as the River Ouſe *is inferior to no one River in the Extent of its Inland Navigation, it is ſuperior to any one in reſpect of Draining; it being the Sewer and Outfall of the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level, of near* 400,000 *Acres; of the Province of* Marſhland, *of* 40,000 *Acres; of the Hundred of* Clackcloſe *and Parts adjacent, of above* 10,000 *Acres of Land.*

I ſhould have ſaid the River Ouſe *was thus famous for Navigation and Draining: Indeed it is far, very far from being ſo now, having for ſeveral Years laſt paſt gradually decayed, inſomuch that it is rendered incapable of Draining any of the aforeſaid Lands, and will be loſt to Navigation in a very ſhort Time.*

This is a Truth confeſs'd by the Corporation of Adventurers, as well as by the Inhabitants of the Country, and the Corporation of Lyn: *All Parties acknowledge the Misfortune, for they all ſuffer; but all do not agree in the Cauſe of this general Calamity, nor in the Method that muſt be put in Practice to relieve them; but all agree and declare, that if ſomething be not done, this Country will be rendered uninhabitable, and the Navigation of the Port of* Lyn *will be loſt, and the Univerſity of* Cambridge, *and all the great Towns ſituate on the Rivers for the Benefit of Navigation, muſt with it decay and become impoveriſhed; and the Cuſtoms and Duties of the State be in Conſequence thereof greatly leſſned.*

As navigable Rivers are of ſuch univerſal Benefit; as the River Ouſe *is one of the principal Rivers of this Kingdom; and as the Loſs of it will be attended with ſuch fatal Conſequences, and is inevitable, unleſs ſome ſpeedy Method be put in Practice to prevent it; the Corporation of* Lyn *were under a Neceſſity of repreſenting the dreadful Apprehenſions they labour under, to the Honourable Perſon to whom theſe Papers are inſcribed: They have had ſo many Years Experience of his great and faithful Services, that they could not but entertain ſome Hope of having their River and Harbour amended and preſerved.*

In purſuit of this deſirable End, that Honourable Gentleman engaged Col. Armſtrong, *Chief Engineer of* England, *to view the Port and Harbour of* Lyn; *which He performed; and alſo view'd the River* Ouſe, *and all the navigable Rivers that branch out of it: And at the Requeſt of the Right Honourable the Earl of* Lincoln, *the Colonel alſo viewed the Fens.*

By his Direction and Advice, and at the Requeſt of the Corporation of Lyn, *and of ſeveral Gentlemen of the adjacent Country, theſe Surveys of the ſaid Rivers and of* Lyn-*Harbour were made; and this Account of the Ancient and Preſent State of Navigation and Draining in theſe Parts was ordered by the Right Honourable* Robert Walpole, *Eſq; to be drawn up, that ſo all Parties may know their true Intereſt, and be induced to act as conſiſtently as Navigation and Draining ſhall appear inſeparable.*

How far theſe Papers will anſwer the great Deſign, I dare not preſume to determine: (*The Country have a Maxim among themſelves,* " That he that will do any Good " in Sewing, muſt do it againſt the Will of ſuch as ſhall have Profit".) *But as they ſet the Cauſes of Prejudice to Navigation and Draining in a clear Light,*

and

and ſhew a Method that if practiſed may reſtore both, 'tis hoped they will have the intended Effect: And then the End will crown the Work with Honour and Safety, and make large room for People and Habitation, with as much advantage to the State, as any other part of the Kingdom can afford.

But if after all, they will ſupinely neglect their Preſervation, or continue to be ſo infatuated or perverſe, not to unite, and come into Meaſures to prevent the growing Danger: It is certain, that as the River Ouſe *is already ſo choaked up as to be rendered utterly incapable of draining the Fens, and the adjacent Country; That River and the Harbour of* Lyn *will alſo in a ſhort time be loſt to Navigation, (like the Harbour of* Rye, *and the River* Rother) *beyond all recovery. So will Decay, Poverty and Deſolation be entail'd on their Poſterity.*

Should this be the Caſe, as theſe Papers prove it inevitably muſt be, unleſs Meaſures are unanimouſly and ſpeedily taken to prevent it; it will however be remembred to the laſting Honour of the Corporation of Lyn, *that they have at all Times, and on all Occaſions, bravely and conſtantly exerted themſelves for the common Service; and that they have acquitted themſelves to Poſterity.*

Having given this Account of the Deſign in general, I ſhall now make my grateful Acknowledgments to the Gentlemen who aſſiſted me to compoſe it.

From Edmond Rolfe, *Eſq; Alderman of* Lyn, *I had many moſt uſeful Papers relating to the Navigation of that Port, after* Denver *Sluices were built. And he alſo favour'd me with the valuable Manuſcript of Mr.* Richard Atkins *of* Outwell, *who flouriſhed the Beginning of King* James I. *Reign. He was an eminent Commiſſioner of the Sewers, a Man of great Learning and Experience; and, as Sir* William Dugdale *ſays, a notable Obſerver of the Fens. He was conſulted by all the Undertakers of his Time, and was Surveyor of the Works of Sewers.*

From this Manuſcript, which is allow'd in Evidence, is printed great Part of the State of the Fens before the general Undertaking to drain them commenced, to which his Name is for the moſt part prefixed.

From the Learned Mr. Bateſon *of* Magdalen, *I had a Manuſcript of the ſame Mr.* Atkins, *which he preſented to* Andrews, *Biſhop of* Ely, Anno 1618. — *The Manuſcript Propoſal of the Lord* Gorges, *for draining the Fens, and many other valuable Papers relating to the Fens.*

As no Man underſtands this Affair better, or has made more Obſervations relating to it, ſo no Body is more communicative, nor more hearty in promoting the Good of theſe Parts; which the great Aſſiſtance he generouſly gave me all the time I have been about this Work, ſufficiently teſtify.

I am alſo particularly oblig'd to Nathaniel Green, *Eſq; of the Corporation of Adventurers, for ſeveral kind Communications, and for the Map of the great Level of the Fens, with the Adventure Lots.*

And now I ſhall conclude nearly in the Words of the Commiſſioners of Sewers when they requeſted the Lords of the Privy Council, Anno 1618. *to ſend a Clerk of their Board as a diſintereſſed Perſon with them, to view the Fens,* &c. *and to report his Opinion to their Lordſhips, that one conſtant and reſolute Courſe might be directed by order of that Board for the general Draining:*

" *That as a Perſon indifferent to all Parts and Parties, I have truly and without Partiality ſhewed the Feaſibleneſs of reſtoring Navigation and Draining in theſe Parts, and the fitteſt Means to effect it.*

ERRATA.

PAGE 3. Line 29. for *ran* read *runs*. L. 30. dele *there*. P. 10. l. 37. for *of* r. *off*. P. 12. l. 11. for *a* r. *n*. P. 16. l. 29. for *Guyhune* r. *Guyhirn*. P. 22. l. 9. for *New* r. *North*. P. 35. l. 23. r. 1620. P. 53. for *did* r. *does*, for *ſwell* r. *flow*. P. 62. l. 1. for *Harrimere* r. *Hermitage*. P. 67. l. 41. for *of* r. *for*. P. 74. l. 31. r. 1604. P. 76. l. 6. r. *yearly* 1000 *Giſt-Beaſts*. P. 83. l. 41. for *any* r. *that*. P. 138. l. *ult.* r. *draining of the Fens*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

INſtruments uſed in Surveying, Levelling, Navigation, *&c.* are made in the moſt accurate Manner, by Mr. *Thomas Wright*, Mathematical Inſtrument Maker to the Prince of *Wales:* At the *Orrery* and *Globe* in *Fleetſtreet*.



The Ancient and Preſent State of the NAVIGATION OF THE Port of *King's-Lyn* in *Norfolk*, AND OF *CAMBRIDGE*;

And of the reſt of the Water-Towns in thoſe Parts: And of the Navigable Rivers that have their Outfall to Sea through *Lyn-Haven*, and their Courſe through the Great Level of the Fens, called *Bedford Level:* And the Ancient and Preſent State of Draining in that Level, Marſhland, and the Hundreds and Parts adjacent.

SECT. I.

The River of Great Ouſe *traced from its Spring-head to its Influx into the Sea; and a Deſcription of all the other Rivers that empty their Waters into it: With a Compariſon between the* Ouſe *and the* Thames, *the* Severn, Humber, &c. *which proves this to be naturally as capable of Navigation and Draining as thoſe Rivers are.*

IN former Ages the Chanel of *Lenne-haven* (as by good Records appeareth) was not above ſix Poles broad. Then *Ouſe parva* (alias *Brandon*) and *Stoke* Waters only had their Influx into the Sea by *Lenne*; which Waters when united a little above *Salters-lode*, (about ſixteen Miles from *Lenne*) paſſed thro' a narrow River, then called *Wiggenhale Eea*. But the Outfall by *Wisbech* decaying, for Cauſes hereafter aſſigned, the Waters of *Great Ouſe* were let fall into *Ouſe Parva* by a new River made from *Littleport-Chair* to *Rebeck*, its former Courſe being from *Littleport* by *Welney* and *Well* to the *North* Sea by *Wisbech*, as I ſhall in the next Section ſhew. But now its Courſe being thro' this new Cut, and joining *Ouſe Parva* and *Stoke* Waters, they all paſſed with united Force to *Lenne*, and did by degrees grind and wear their Chanel wider and deeper; making thereby ſo ſpacious an Inlet to the Tides from Sea, and ſo good an Outfall for the Fen-Waters, that it became one of the moſt famous Rivers in this Kingdom for Navigation and Draining. And ſuch is its Length from its Spring-head to its Influx into the Sea; ſo many are the Countries it runs through, and ſo great are

the Quantities of freſh Water it receives, that in theſe reſpects it rivals the *Humber* and the *Severn*, and is ſcarcely inferior to *Thames*; and indeed it will appear to be as conſiderable a River as moſt in *England*, if we compare the Maps hereunto annex'd, and duly weigh the following Survey and Deſcription, which traces the *Ouſe* from its Spring-head in *Northamptonſhire* to its Outfall by *Lenne*, taking notice of all the Rills, Brooks and Rivers it receives in its Courſe.

Uſa or *Ouſe*, formerly *Iſa*, hath its Head on a gentle riſing Ground full of bubbling Fountains near *Brackley* in the County of *Northampton* (ſee the Map of all the Rivers that have their Courſe thro' the Fens) 160 Miles from its Influx into the Sea: longer than *Humber*, long as *Severn*, and wanting not 10 Miles of the Length of *Thames*. As the Water goeth

In its way from its Spring before it runs (12 Miles) to *Buckingham*, it takes in two Rills from the *North*, riſing near *Stow* and *Yaxley:* and two Miles below *Buckingham*, it receives from the *North-Weſt* a Rill from *Lillingſton-Dorrel*; and from the *South-Weſt*, a River of three principal Heads, the firſt riſing at *Fritwell* in *Oxfordſhire*, deſcends to *Hardwick*, there receives a Rill, and paſſes on by *Fringford* and *Goddenton*, where it enters *Buckinghamſhire*; and after a Courſe of about twenty Miles, receives near *Eaſt-Claydon* the ſecond Rill from *Whitchurch*; and about four Miles farther, the third Rill of ſeveral Heads riſing near *Winſlow*, *Upper-Weale* and *Shenly*, all in *Buckinghamſhire*. With theſe Waters it runs about three Miles farther, and empties it ſelf at *Thornton* into *Ouſe*, after a Courſe of thirty Miles; bringing with it the Downfal and Springs of *Buckinghamſhire*, and of Part of *Oxfordſhire*. Then doth *Ouſe* deſcend to *Stony-ſtratford* and *Wolverton* (about five Miles farther) at which laſt Place it receives from the *Weſt* the River *Widon* out of *Northamptonſhire*, having its Springs at *Sulgrave* and *Aſhwell*, falling under *Touceſter Grafton*, and then to *Wolverton*, after a Courſe of about twenty Miles, loſing its Name at its Fall into *Ouſe*. Which deſcends, about ſeven Miles lower, to *Newport-pagnel*, where it receives from the *South* a River of two Heads; the one deſcending from *Whipſnade*, the *North* Confines of the Counties of *Buck. Bedford*, and *Hertfordſhires*, three Miles from *Dunſtable*; falls down by *Leighton*, *Middleton-Keynes*, and within two Miles of *Newport*, where it receives the ſecond Branch falling from *Halcot*; and then, after about thirty Miles Circuit yields his full Force into *Ouſe* at *Newport* aforeſaid. Then doth *Ouſe* make his Progreſs in a moſt crooked Courſe by *Olney*, *Bletneſhoe*, *Bedford* and *Tempsford*, between thirty and forty Miles lower from *Newport*; and there receives into it from the *South*, a ſwift River of five principal Heads: The firſt from *Woburn*, the ſecond from *Tuddington*, the third from *Berton*, all in *Bedfordſhire*; the fourth from *Hitchin*, the fifth from *Baldock*, both in *Hertfordſhire:* All which are conjoin'd at *Shelford*, *Langford*, and under *Bigleſwade*; and then paſſing by *Sandy*, fall into *Ouſe* at *Tempsford* aforeſaid, after a Courſe of between twenty and thirty Miles from the Spring at *Woburn*. Then doth *Ouſe* continue its Courſe about five Miles farther to St. *Neots* in *Huntingdonſhire*, receiving from the *South* a River of two Heads from *Granſden* and *Stow*, falling by *Eynesbury* and St. *Neot* into *Ouſe*; which paſſeth on one Mile farther to *Paxton Parva*, and there receives from the *Weſt* the River *Hayle*, which beginneth about *Perton-hill*, and runneth by *Stoughton Magna*, *Aleweſton*, and falleth into *Ouſe* between St. *Neot* and *Paxton Parva*, after running about ten Miles. From hence the *Ouſe* continues his Courſe to *Bugden* and the *Offords*, until it come to *Brampton*, about eight Miles from *Paxton Parva*, where it maketh an Iſland, called *Portmead*; and there it receiveth from the *Weſt* under *Hinchinbrook* a Rill of two Heads, the firſt from *Brenton*, twelve Miles up into the Country; the ſecond from *Gidney Magna* and *Aukenbury*, ſixteen Miles off.

Then the *Ouſe* carries all theſe Waters united under *Huntington-Bridge*, and about eight Miles farther, waſhing St. *Ives*, flow on ſeven Miles lower to *Erith*; where it did anciently divide it ſelf into two Branches: One called the *Weſt-Water* (ſuppos'd to have been a Slaker to eaſe the other Branch of *Ouſe*) ran *North*, upon the Partition of the County of *Huntington* and the Iſle of *Ely*, under *Chatteris* to *Benwick*, where it met with Part of the River *Nene*; and then both ran to *March-Bridge*, and thence to *Upwell:* Where it met the other Branch deſcending to *Harrimere*, and then with *Grant* to *Ely*, *Littleport* and *Welney*, and ſo to *Upwell*, and thence united to *Wisbech* (of which more hereafter.) But

upon

upon the Decay of that Outfall, theſe Branches took a back Courſe; the laſt mention'd to *Littleport*, and the *Weſt-Water* to *Erith-Bridge*, where it formerly had its Courſe out of *Ouſe* (ſaith Sir *Clement Edmonds*) and ran with *Ouſe* to *Audrey-Cauſey* upon the Confines of the Iſle of *Ely* and *Cambridgeſhire*, and was for the moſt part thereof defended with Banks: and paſſing on by *Haddenham*, *Wyvelingham* and *Stretham* to *Harrimer*, about thirteen Miles below *Erith*, received the *Granta*. See the Map.

Granta, or *Cambridge* River, of three principal Heads. The firſt beginning near *Aſhwell* in *Hertfordſhire*, deſcends *Weſt* of *Gilden-morden* into *Cambridgeſhire*; and after running ſix Miles, takes in a Rill from *Baſſingborn*, and then runs about four Miles farther, till beyond *Arrington* they are joined by another from *Waddon*, and about two Miles lower by a Rill from *Meldrich*; and theſe run together about two Miles farther to *Harlſton*, where it receives a Brook of three Springs riſing near *Newton* and *Foulmere*; and all theſe paſs united with a conſiderable Stream two Miles farther to *Granchester*, and there meet the ſecond and third Branches conjoin'd: the one from *Henham* and *Newport*, called the River *Rea*; the other from *Barlow* and *Linton*, all in *Eſſex*; and both Streams meeting at *Shelford*, paſs on and join the other Branch at *Granchester* aforeſaid; and all run with united Force three Miles farther to *Cambridge*, taking with them conſiderable Quantities of Water that comes from the ſmall Bridges near that Place; and iſſuing together thro' *Grant-Bridge* does a Mile below receive *Qui* Waters, which come from Springs at *Feverſham* and both *Wilbrahams*: And three Miles lower, *Botſham-Bridge* Waters, which riſe in many Places in the Country, and goes thro' *Swaffham*, falling into *Grant* about one Furlong below *Garden-tree*. But of ancient Time it fell into *Reach-lode*, and ran to *Upwere*; for the River of *Grant* paſſing formerly from *Beech* to *Charlſen* in *Cottenham*, and ſo into *Ouſe*, was diverted, and by a ſtrait Courſe turned down by another Branch of the ſame River to *Harrimere*. Grant Flu. *Navigable.*

From *Garden-tree*, the Waters of *Grant* ran about ten Miles to *Harrimere*; and there, after having made a Progreſs from their Spring about thirty Miles, bringing with them the Springs and Downfal of *Cambridgeſhire*, Part of *Hertfordſhire* and *Eſſex*, yield their full Force into *Ouſe* at *Harrimere*, where *Grant* loſeth his Name. Then doth *Ouſe*, with all the forementioned Waters, deſcend toward *Ely*, and in its Progreſs thither receives *Soam-meere* Waters, which iſſue from the Springs of *Chippenham*, *Snaylwell*, *Exuing*, *Lanward*, and the Downfal from all the Heaths and hilly Pariſhes about *Newmarket*.

From *Ely* the *Ouſe* paſſeth with a moſt crooked Courſe to *Littleport*, making a Tract of ten Miles by Water, whereas by Land 'tis reckon'd but four Miles between *Ely* and *Littleport*. Here

Mildenhall, a Navigable River, from the *Eaſt*, joins the *Ouſe* (ſee the Map) a River of two principal Heads. The Springs of one riſe near *Bradfield*, *St. George*, and *Weltham Magna* in *Suffolk*, and four Miles lower paſſeth by *Bury St. Edmond*'s; and after receiving a Rill from *Fornham-Geneiſe* touches *Lackford*, eight Miles farther, and four Miles lower comes to *Mildenhall*; and after a Courſe of four Miles below *Mildenhall*, it receives the other Branch near *Iſleham-chair*, whoſe Springs riſe between *Aſhly* and *Dalham* upon the Confines of *Suffolk* and *Cambridgeſhire*, and fall down by *Kennet* and *Badlingham* to *Iſleham-chaire* aforeſaid to the firſt Branch: and both in one Courſe paſs together through the Fens near *Shippy*, taking by the way out of *Fordham* and *Soam* Fens a Surcharge of Water paſſing by a Slaker from *Fordham* Mills by the *Eaſt* Fen of *Soam*, to the Partition between *Soam* Fen and *Iſleham*, and thence into *Mildenhall* River, which continues his Courſe to *Dead-miles-end* about *Prick-willow*; and there, at ſix Miles Diſtance from *Iſleham-chair*, falleth into *Ouſe*, after having made a Progreſs of between twenty and thirty Miles. Mildenhall Flu. *Navigable.*

Then does *Ouſe* deſcend to *Littleport* (where it formerly had its Courſe, as is before obſerv'd, to *Wisbech*; ſee *Hayward*'s Map) and continues its Courſe to *Prieſts-houſes* or *Rebeck*; and there it receives

Ouſe Parva, or *Brandon*, a Navigable River, from the *Eaſt* (ſee the Map) a Stream of five principal Heads. The firſt comes from *Wulpit* in *Suffolk*, and runs Brandon Flu. *Navigable.*

runs by *Norton* to *Ixworth* (eight Miles) where it takes in a Rill from *Timworth* and *Pakenham*; and paſſing ten Miles farther by *Uſton*, does, at the Partition of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, receive the ſecond Branch ftom *Lopham*; and theſe paſs united two Miles to *Thetford*, (there the firſt Branch loſeth its Name of *Thet* or *Sit* River) where it receives the other three Branches; one riſing *Eaſtward* out of a Lake or Meere near *Banham*, and goeth to *Harling*, and a little below joins the other two Branches united; one riſing between *Attleborow* and *Ellingham Magna*, paſſes to *Shropſham*, and there meets the other Branch from *New-Bucknam*, and they run together till the *Thet* receives them as aforeſaid; and all together fall in at *Thetford*, and make their way to *Brandon* eight Miles; and between *Hockwold* and *Wrangford* paſſes through the Fens to a Place called *Rebeck* or *Prieſtshouſes*, taking by the way *Lakenheath-lode*; and at *Rebeck*, after having made a Courſe of between thirty and forty Miles, it uniteth it ſelf to *Ouſe Magna:* and ſuch great Quantities of Water does it bring with it out of the ſandy Confines of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, that it deſervedly retains the ancient Name of *Ouſe Parva.*

Then doth *Great Ouſe* continue his Courſe about ſix Miles farther, and there receives from the *Eaſt*,

Stoke Flu. *Navigable.*

Wiſſey, or *Stoke* River, (ſee the Map) which beginneth at *Weſt-Bradenham* in *Norfolk*, and falls by the *Pickenhams* to *Great Creſſingham*, and thence *North* to *Langford*, to *Ikborow*, and to *Moundford-Bridge*, and thence to *Norwold*; and after a Courſe of about twenty Miles under *Whittington*, receiving by the way a Rill from the *North-Eaſt*, riſing a little above *Oakley* in the Clay, and paſſing to *Oxborow*, does, a little below the Town, fall into *Stoke* River; who, ſo united, paſs on: and a little below, againſt *Whittington-Houſes*, the River receiveth another Rill from a Spring called St. *Botolph*'s *Well*, riſing near *Beauchamp Well*, and paſſeth to *Eaſtmore-Mill*, and thence to *Æton-dam*, and ſo to *Whittington-Houſes* by the way in the Fens parting *Stoke* and *Oxborow*. Then doth this River paſs on to *Stoke-Bridge*, and thence by many Crooks and Turnings to *Helgay-Bridge*; and by the way receives a Rill from *Methwold*, parting *Methwold* and *Northwold* Fens. From *Helgay-Bridge* the Rivers run with a very ſwift Current by *Helgay*, *Fordham*, and *Denver* Fens into *Ouſe*, having made a Courſe of about thirty Miles, and bringing with it, beſides its Springs, all the Downfal Waters between *Swaffham* and *Brandon*.

Then *Ouſe* deſcends to *Salters-lode*, about two Miles farther, where it receives from the *Weſt* Part of the Waters of the River,

Nene Flu. *Navigable.*

Nene, deſcending formerly from *Peterborow*, under *Horſey-bridge*, and thro' the *Meeres* to *March-bridge*, (ſee the Map) and from thence to *Upwell* and *Outwell*, and ſo thro' *Well-Creek* into *Ouſe* at *Salters-lode* aforeſaid.

Hence does *Ouſe*, with this great Quantity of Water, paſs under *Downham*, *Stow*, *Magdalen* and *Germans* Bridges, which are not much above a Mile diſtant from each other, and from *Germans* has (as by the old and new Map appeareth) a moſt crooked Courſe to *Lenne*, ſixteen Miles from *Salters-lode*; and there it receives *Lenne* River, alias *Sandringham Ea* from the *Eaſt*, which riſes under *Lycham*, and coming by *Caſtle-acre*, *Narford*, and *Sech-hith*, falls into *Ouſe* after a Courſe between the Hills of between twenty and thirty Miles, at the *South* End of the Port of *Lenne.*

Sandringham Ea, *a Navigable River.*

Then *Ouſe* uttereth the great collected Body of Water it hath brought with it out of *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, *Cambridgeſhire*, *Eſſex*, *Hertford*, *Bedford*, *Buckingham*, *Oxford*, and *Northamptonſhires* into the *North* Sea, about ten Miles below *Lenne*, after having made a Courſe of about 160 Miles.

This Abundance of freſh Waters making their Paſſage by this Courſe with great Force and Strength, made the Chanel of *Ouſe* wider and deeper by degrees, ſo that ſome hundred Years ago *Lenne-haven* was from *eight* worn to *forty* Poles wide: And tho' all poſſible Care has been taken, and the greateſt Induſtry uſed to confine the Haven, yet it is at this Day between *fifty* and *ſixty* Poles wide in the narroweſt Part thereof; a Width much complain'd of by ſome unthinking People, as if that was the Cauſe of Miſchiefs hereafter explored and accounted for; and yet it is much narrower than any other Navigable River in the World, ſo near the Outfall. And the Reaſons why it is ſo narrow are theſe:

It is not perhaps above five or six, at moſt ſeven hundred Years, ſince the Outfall of *Wisbech* decaying, the River of *Great Ouſe* was by the ſtrait Cut and new River before-mentioned ſent by *Lenne* to Sea; *Wigenhale Eea* was till then very narrow, but now theſe great Quantities of freſh Waters rapidly forcing their Courſe through it and *Lenne-haven*, did grind and wear them both wider and deeper than they were before; and tho' the Port of *Lenne Regis*, and the Inhabitants of *Weſt-Lenne* (ſituate on each Side the River) uſed all poſſible Means to defend their Dwellings and Land againſt the Sea, and did confine the Waters in as narrow a Compaſs as they could; yet ſuch was the Force of the Tides and Freſhes, that they perpetually gain'd upon Marſhland, and by degrees the Sea ſwallowed up the Church of *North-Lenne*, and many of the Houſes of *Weſt-Lenne*.

And certain it is, that the Sea will be continually gaining on them; for, from *Lenne* to *Germans-bridge*, where the Sea and Land Waters have more Liberty than they have at *Lenne*, the River was a Mile over ſome hundred Years ſince, and would no doubt have continued a proportionable Width many Miles farther, and been by this time abſolute and compleat for Navigation and Draining, had it not been with perpetual Expence confin'd by and at *Germans*, *Magdalen*, *Stow* and *Downham* Bridges, and by the Villages ſituate on its Banks, and ſome other Impediments hereafter mentioned.

For as the *Thames*, whoſe Freſhes ſeem to be little ſuperior to thoſe of *Ouſe*, and whoſe Lengths are nearly equal, and who have the Tides put up from Sea into them nearly the ſame Length of way, is, ten Miles above the *Buoy of the Nore*, two Miles wide, which is about as high up that River, as *Lenne* is up this, where the *Ouſe* is not two Furlongs wide. (See the Map of the *Thames*, *Humber*, *Medway*, and *Ouſe*, all done by the ſame Scale.) At *Graveſend*, eighteen Miles from Sea, above half a Mile over (about as far from Sea as *Germans*, where the *Ouſe* is but half a Furlong wide.) At *Woolwich*, thirty five Miles from Sea, about a quarter of a Mile over (about as far from Sea as *Ely*, where the *Ouſe* is not a quarter of a Furlong wide) and decreaſes gradually till it comes to a Point in its Spring. So I am of Opinion, that the *Ouſe*, but for the great Reſtraints and Confinements laid upon its Waters, and other Reaſons hereafter mentioned, would have had a like Width and Depth, to the great Improvement of Navigation, by receiving more of the Tidal Floods than it now can do; and to the perfect Draining of the Great Level of the Fens, by being capacious and wide enough to receive and convey thro' it to Sea, thoſe great Floods, which deſcending from the high Country have always much annoy'd the Fens.

And as the *Humber* is above two Miles wide againſt *Hull*, and of the Depth of eight or ten Fathom at Low-water-mark, and yet has not a Quantity of freſh Water equal to thoſe of *Ouſe*: And whoſe Tides are preciſely like the Tides that put up the *Ouſe*, it being High-Water at *Hull* and at *Lyn* the ſame Minute of Time; and both receiving the Tidal-Flood from the ſame Sea, *viz.* the *Northern* Ocean, and conſequently their Waters equally filty; had Nature been left to her ſelf, and had no Tricks been play'd with *Ouſe*, *Lenne-haven* had probably been at this Day as deep as *Humber*.

And as the *Medway* is nearly a Mile wide at its Mouth, and at *Chatham*, ſixteen Miles up, is ſeventy Poles over, and of a Depth ſufficient for Men of War to ride at Anchor at Low-water: So the *Ouſe*, till depriv'd of its ancient Receptacles for the Tides, and great Stock of Back-water, had, conſidering how narrow it is, a Depth proportionable to the Depth of any of theſe Rivers, as I ſhall prove in the following Section.

SECT. II.

Of the ancient good State of the Navigation of Lyn, Cambridge, *&c. upon the River* Ouſe, *and in all the Rivers that have their Courſe thro' the Fens, called* Bedford Level; *and of the Width and Depth of the River* Ouſe, Lyn-haven, *and Chanel to Seaward in thoſe Times.*

THAT the ancient Outfall of *Owſe* was by *Wisbech* to Sea, the Name it ſelf of *Owſe* ſheweth, *viz. Owsbech.* ——The Sea-Banks from *Well* to *Wisbech*, and the whole Tract declare it. —— The Commiſſion of 21 *Edw.* 1. ordaining the Waters of *Well* to be ſent by *Wisbech* their former Outfall, *in debitum & antiquum curſum, &c.* proves it. As alſo does *Wisbech* Caſtle, founded *ſuper flumen illud famoſum quod Well-ſtreme appellatur*, &c.

A. D. 1292.

Regiſt. de Petroburg.

And that there was ſometime no River between *Littleport-chair* and *Rebeck*, or *Prieſts-houſes*, a Record vouched by Mr. *Hoxham*, Surveyor to *William* Earl of *Arundel*, ſheweth; the Tract of the River being of a clean contrary Nature, *viz.* more ſtrait than any Part of the *Ouſe* in all the Fens from *Ely* to *Wisbech*. This the Map of the Fens done by *Hayward*, *Anno* 1604. alſo proveth. See that Map from *A* to *B*.

When the *Ouſe* had his perfect Outfall by *Wisbech*, the Haven of *Lenne* was but ſix Perches wide; and was by due Preſentment ſaid, at that Time, to be of a Width both ſufficient for the Haven and Veſſels thither reſorting by the Inlet of the ſalt Water, and large enough to paſs away the freſh.

But when the Outfall by *Wisbech* decayed, the Waters of the Level naturally deſcended towards *Lenne-haven*, it being the very loweſt Part of the Country; and as many of them as could, forced their way thro' *Well-Creek*, and fell into *Wigenhale Eea* at *Salters-lode:* The Remainder overflowing great Part of the Fens, the Country to ſave themſelves from being perpetually ſurrounded, were forced to make *a Cut and new River from* Littleport-chair *to* Rebeck, to let the Waters of *Great Ouſe* fall into *Ouſe Parva*, alias *Brandon* Water, which has its Outfall to the Sea by *Lenne*. Then alſo did the River *Nene*, from *Peterborough*, thro' the Meeres by *Upwell* and *Outwell*, make his way for *Lenne* through *Well* River; and in Conſequence of the Decay of *Spalding* Outfall, great Part of the River *Weland* joined the *Nene*, and came this way too, emptying their Waters into *Ouſe* at *Salters-lode*, thro' *Well* Creek; at *Littleport*, thro' *Welney* River; and ſome thro' the *Weſt* Water into *Ouſe* at *Erith*.

Such great Quantities of Water taking this new Courſe, the Inhabitants of Marſhland were very apprehenſive of the ill Conſequence *They* might be of to them, and of the great Danger their Province would be in by a Breach of Banks. And therefore they, 21 *E.* 1. procured a Commiſſion from the King, bearing Date *June* 19. 1292. directed to *Peter de Campania*, *Thomas de Hackford*, and *Adam de Shropham*, to enquire concerning the ſame, and to apply the moſt proper Remedy; who hereupon ſitting at *Utwell* on *Monday* after the Feaſt of St. *Peter ad vincula* next enſuing, and taking into Conſideration what ought to be done for reſtoring of thoſe Waters of *Utwell* (for ſo that great River of *Ouſe*, which had formerly paſſed that way, was then called) to their due and ancient Courſe, did with the Aſſent of the Country ordain, that there ſhould be three Dams made; one at *Utwell-bridge*, another at *Little-lode-bridge* in *Upwell*, and the third in *Fen-dike-lane* in *Upwell* alſo, to ſtop the Waters of *Nene* and *Welland* from deſcending into *Ouſe*, and to force them to the Outfall of *Wisbech* again.

The Inhabitants of Marſhland (becauſe theſe Stops would be for their Benefit) without any Authority from the ſaid Juſtices given to them, *&c.* did of their own accord make a Stop of the ſaid Water at *Little-lode*; and continued it, until by the Force and Weight of the Water, and by the Help of ſome Perſons who paſſed that way with their Boats, Part thereof was opened, and ſoon after, by an Ordinance, the remaining Part of the Stop was cleared.

And *Walter de Langtone*, Biſhop of *Litchfield* and *Coventry*, Treaſurer to *E.* 1. did by his Power, ſay ſome, (but I rather believe by the Appointment of thoſe Juſtices before named) cauſe to be made a Dam at *Utwell*, the better to drain his

A MAPP
of the RIVER of GREAT OUSE,
from its Springhead to its Influx into the SEA being 160 Miles. And of all the RIVERS that have their Course thro' the great LEVEL of the FENNS called
BEDFORD LEVEL.

Surveyed by Tho: Badeslade: :
A: D: 1723.

T: Badeslade Delin:

NB. The Fenns are Shaded to shew their Extent

PART of WARWICK SHIRE

PART O

LEICESTER S

OXFORD SHI:

PART OF BUCKINGHAM SHIRE

BUCKINGHAM SHIRE

BEDFORD SHIRE

PART OF HERTFORD SHIRE

HUNTINGDON SHIRE

PART OF CAMBRIDGE SHIRE

PART OF ESSEX

SUFFOLK

Fedford Leve

Prittwell, Ardley, Hardwick, Brackley, Catesby, Sulgrove, Aſhwell, Watford, Fringford, Cold Higham, Weſtby, Silverſtone, Harborough, Stow, Yachley, Pattesſhall, Kelmerſhoo, Norton, Brumſton, Gayton, Goddenton, BUCKINGHAM, NORTHAMPTON, Rothwell, Weſton, Pipwell, E. Cladon, Thornton, Stony Stretford, Hunſton, Billing parva, Boughton, Eaſton, Rockingham, Uppingham, Woolverton, Upper Weald, Pidington, Kettering, Winſlow, Shenley, Corby, Weldon, Dean, Bletherwick, Bridgſtock, Burton, Newport Pagnell, Otney, Wellingborough, Luſwick, Cliff, Stamf, Whitchurch, Blechley, Middleton Keynes, Fotheringhay Caſtle, Higham Ferrys, Thrapſton, Dundle, Harwood, Turvey, Lowel R., Halcott, Woburn, Litlington, Perton Hill, Brenton, Gidney Magna, Allerton, Wingrave, Leighton, Tuddingtone, Ampthill, BEDFORD, Stoughton Magna, Harlington, Meweſton, Parton Parva, Spaldwick, Oxendon, Yardley, Berton, Tempford, St. Neots, Burden, Hunchingbrook, Winſley Meere, Iwinghe, Stefford, Eyneſbury, Bramton, Portmead Lit, Offord, Whipſnade, Sandy, Dunſtable, Langford, Biggleſwade, Grandſden, HUNTINGDON, Berry Brook, Berry, Ramſey Meere, Bennick, Hitching, Baldock, St. Ives, Pidley, Somerſham, Erith, Aſhwell, Over, Hermitage, Gilden Morden, Willingham, Arrington, Bampton, Baſſingborn, Andry Bridge, Cottenham, Whaddon, Granteſter, CAMBRIDGE, Harſton, Weſterton, Milton, Ely, Meldrith, Shelford, Waterbeach, Ferry Stretham Meere, Foulmere, Newton, Feverſham, Quy, Wittleford Bridge, Wilbraham, Belſham, Soam, Soam Meer, Landvade, Iſleham, Badlingham, Wiſlington, Walden, Linton, Aſhley, Kennet, Newport, Henham, Barlow, Lidgate, Kenford, Berton, Mills, Dalham, Ouſden, Iſlingham, Lackford, St. EDMUNDS BURY, Witham Mag., Bradfield St. George, Hengrave, Fordham, S. Martin, Feornham Geneſe, Timworth, Fakenham, Euſton, Wulpit, Lxworth, Knotſhall, Norton

N.B. This MAPP being made to shew the Natural Courses *of the* RIVERS, *of* New Bedford River *and other* Works *of the* Adventurers *are omitted.*

PART OF NOTTINGHAM SHIRE

PART OF LINCOLN SHIRE

PART OF LINCOLN SHIRE

HOLLAND *within* LINCOLN SHIRE

PART OF NORFOLK

LINCOLN SHIRE

MARSH LAND

LINCOLN

Witham flu:
Beckingham
Stayfford
Westborough
Grantham
Harlaston
N. Witham
LINCOLN
Sudbrooke
Langworth
F. Torrington
Holywell
Laund
Sleaford
Rowston
Folkingham
Bourne
Billingate
Oakwell
Walmsford
Sutton
Basston
Market Deeping
Mathorp
Swaton
Helpringham
Glen flu:
Bourn Drain
Longhoh Drain
Dogdyke
Dogdyke Drain
Tattershall
Horn Castle
Bane R:
Witham
PETERBORO
Triangle Bridge
Pinchbeck
Surfleet
Dimmington
Brothertoft
Cross Keys
Wyland flu:
Croyland
Spalding
Boston
Benwick
March
Guyhurn
Leverington
Tidd St Giles
Nene flu:
Shrewnesh
Wilbeach
Gatt Sand
Suckrey
Upwell
Outwell
Beaupre Hall
Wash Creek
Terrington
Waynfleet
Salters Lode
Magdalen
Islington
Clench Warton
Theif
TERRINGTON HOLE.
Long Roger
Ouse flu:
Downham
Stow
St. Germans
Mid Lyn
Pinque Way
Helgay
Sechin
LYN
N Sand
Ferrier Buoy
Dogs head
Lyn Knock
LYNN DEEPS
Sunk
Woolpack
Gaywood
Wolton
Castle Rising
Pentney
Stoke
Narford
Stoke Ferry
Bequeschamp Hall
Whittington
Oxboro
Norwould
Lockler Clay
Brandon
Mundford Bridge
Dersingham
Sneesham
Hitcham
Castleacre
Appleton
Houghton
Thornham
Brancaster
Dockin
Dockin Sand
Burnham Flatts
Langford
Croxtingham
Ickborough
Fuckenham
Lycham
N. Creek
Standford
Holm Hale
THETFORD
W. Bradenham
Holcam
Wells
Hackham Meere
Lartingford
Shropham
Ellingham Magna
Attleborough
Blackney
Hudworth
Banham
New Bucknam
Meere
A Scale of Miles.
5 10 15

Scale 2

Parker Sculp.

his adjacent Lands. But the 3. *E.* 3. there was a Preſentment exhibited to the Juſtices Itinerant ſitting at *Northampton*, importing, That whereas the Courſe of the River *Nene* had been directly from *Peterborow* to *Lenne* in *Norfolk*, by which the Navigation was maintain'd: That about twenty Years ago, 1301, a Dam was made at *Utwell*, ſo that no Veſſel could paſs as before that way: And the Jurors for the County of *Norfolk*, impanell'd and ſworn *May* the 12th, 1332. did ſay upon their Oaths, that *Walter de Langton* did, for the Draining his Lands, cauſe a Stop to be made at *Utwell* of the aforeſaid Waters, by which the Navigation from *Holme*, *Yaxley*, &c. unto the Port of *Biſhop's-Lenne*, as alſo from *Peterborow*, could not paſs as before they did, but were forced to go a long way about, *viz.* by *Old Wellen-bee* and *Littleport*, (fifty Miles in going to and fro) to the Hinderance and Damage of Trade, *&c.* And the Jurors of the Counties of *Lincoln*, *Cambridgeſhire*, *Huntington*, and *Northamptonſhires*, impanell'd and ſworn likewiſe, ſaid, That beſides the Hindrance to Navigation, great Part of the Low-lands of the Level were thereby drowned (of which in the next Section;) whereupon the Sheriff of *Norfolk* had command to pull the Dam down. And in like manner the Sheriffs for the Counties of *Cambridge*, *Huntington*, and *Lincoln*, were required to make Proclamation within their reſpective Liberties, That all Perſons concerned therein ſhould be at *Utwell* aforeſaid, to aid the ſaid Sheriff of *Norfolk* in pulling down the ſaid Dam. *A. D.* 1332.

And now the Waters paſſing uninterrupted again by *Salters-lode* to *Lenne*; and ſuch vaſt Quantities deſcending this way, in Default of their proper Outfalls, they, with the increaſing Aſſiſtance of the Tides, did by degrees, with their Weight and rapid Force, wear and grind the River *Ouſe* and *Lenne-haven* to ſuch a Width, that Marſhland (their Banks being broke by the Rage of the Sea) exhibited a Petition to *E.* 3. ſhewing, That whereas the River going to *Lenne* had uſed to run between Banks diſtant twelve Perches aſunder, but was now a full Mile in Breadth, they humbly petition'd that the River might be confin'd to its ancient Width. 1342.

But the Inhabitants of *Lenne* promoted a Bill in the then Parliament, wherein it was alledged, that the Courſe of the ſaid River ought not to be made narrower; if it ſhould, not only the Port of the ſaid Town of *Lenne* would be deſtroy'd, but the Counties of *Cambridge*, *Huntington*, *Northampton*, *Bedford*, *Buckingham*, *Leiceſter*, *Warwick*, *Derby*, and *Suffolk*, would ſuſtain much Damage thereby.

It ſeems there was nothing done upon this Petition of Marſhland. For the 2 *R.* 2. they preſented another, imploring the ſame in effect as before: And the King and Parliament conſtituted *William de Ufford* Earl of *Suffolk*, *Robert de Willoughby*, *William de Wychingham*, and *John de Hawe* his Juſtices, to view the Banks on the *Weſt* Side of *Ouſe*, between *Lenne* and *Tilney*. And they preſented them to be in a very miſerable Condition; and reported the Breadth of the River to be the Cauſe thereof; which was then at *Lenne* 40 Perches wide, at 16 Feet to the Perch, and they ſaid it ought to be reſtrain'd 34 Perches; ſo that the Breadth of the Chanel of the ſaid River ſhould be reduced to ſix Perches, its ancient Width. 1378.

I do not find that any thing was done herein, but only a Petition from Marſhland to the Lords of the Privy-Council. 16. *J.* 1. inſinuates, that the Haven of *Lenne* was ſtraitned in the Reign of *R.* 2. But other Petitions from that Province ſhew, that either the Haven was not then ſtraitned; or if it was, that they could not confine it, or keep it ſo. For the Verdict for the Sewers in *Well* and *Stowbardolph*, 8. *Eliz.* ſays, That the Banks of Marſhland could not well be preſerved, unleſs there were ſome Proviſion made for the ſtraitning of *Lenne-haven*, which was then wider than it was wont to be, and cauſed the Flood to riſe at *Salters-lode* one Foot higher than it was wont to do within theſe twenty Years: Wherefore they beſeeched their Worſhips to have a ſpecial Regard for the Salvation of all the Commons, Fences, Lands, Meadows, and Paſtures next adjoining to the ſaid great River of *Ouſe*, which lie in great Peril to be loſt by Breach of Bank, unleſs good Proviſion be made. Alſo upon a View taken by the Commiſſioners of Sewers of the River of *Ouſe* from *Salters-lode* unto the Outfall of *Lenne*, they found a very large and quick River, much increaſed in Depth and Breadth ſince the Decay of the two Outfalls of *Nene* and *Welland*, to the Danger of Marſhland *, and *Wigenhall* Banks on the *Weſt* Side of *Ouſe*, as 1596.

the

* Auguſt 14. 1618. S. Fane, Miles Sandys, Oliver Cromwell, *&c. Commiſſioners.*

as the Inhabitants there adjoyſted complain'd, *viz.* of *Wigenhall*, *Iſlington*, *Tilney*, and *Clenchwarton*, inſomuch as the ſaid Towns were Petitioners for a Strait to be made in the Haven near *Lenne*. And ſoon after the ſaid View, the Inhabitants preſented the following Petition.

To the Right Honourable the Lords and others of his Majeſty's moſt Honourable Privy-Council: The humble Petition of the diſtreſſed Inhabitants of Marſhland, and other Parts adjoining upon the River of Ouſe *in the County of* Norfolk,

Humbly ſheweth,

Nov. 13. 1618. "THAT whereas the Haven of *Lenne* being the proper Outfall of the River " of *Ouſe*, as well by the great Inlet of the outrageous Tides from the " Sea, as by the continual Recourſe of many freſh Waters unduly thither de- " ſcending in default of their proper Outfall, is now grown to ſuch an exceſſive " Greatneſs, whereby the Banks of the ſaid River are ſo worn and undermined, " that your Supplicants for divers Years paſt have been daily enforced to en- " large the ſaid River, by ſetting back their defenſive Banks, with an inſupport- " able Charge; and yet notwithſtanding all their Endeavours and Charges, they " ſtand in continual Fear of their Goods, Lands and Lives, as by the late In- " undation in 1613. was manifeſt by the Loſs of more than 30,000 *l.* with " many of his Majeſty's Subjects: A moſt lamentable Spectacle, which hath too " well appeared. Beſeeching your Lordſhips, that you would be pleaſed to take " into your Honourable Conſiderations the Danger of this Part of the Country, " and to foreſee, as Fathers of the ſame, that either by ſtraitning of the ſaid " Haven, as was done with good Succeſs by a ſpecial Commiſſion granted to " that effect, upon a grievous Complaint made in the Time of *Richard* 2. and " then executed accordingly by an Inquiſition taken upon Oath; and is now " conceived by your humble Petitioners, to be the beſt and ſafeſt way for the " Preſervation of thoſe Countries; or by any other Ways or Means which to " your Honours Wiſdoms ſhall be thought moſt fitting, whereby this Danger " may be prevented and avoided: And your Supplicants ſhall be always bound " to pray for your Lordſhips.

Which Petition being by the Lords of the Privy-Council referred to the then Right Honourable Earl of *Arundel*, Lord Biſhop Elect of *Wincheſter*, and others the Lords Committees then lately appointed for the Buſineſs of the Sewers: They the ſaid Committees for their better Satisfaction (and that they might learn how far it was practicable to ſtraiten *Lynn-haven*, and what Service or Prejudice ſuch a Strait would be of to the Navigation of that Port, and to Draining of the Levels above the intended Strait) did call before themſelves divers Gentlemen of *Northamptonſhire*, *Huntingdon*, *Cambridge*, *Norfolk*, and the Iſle of *Ely*; and after a long hearing and Debate of all ſuch Doubts and Queſtions as were moved upon that Conference, and upon that Occaſion made their Report as followeth to the Right Honourable the Lords of the Privy-Council at the *Starchamber*, on *Wedneſday* the 25th of the ſame *November*.

PRESENT,

Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*,
Lord Chancellor,
Lord Steward,
Lord Chamberlain,
Lord Viſcount *Wallingford*,
Lord Biſhop of *Ely*,
Lord *Carew*,
Mr. Treaſurer,
Mr. Vice-Chamberlain.
Mr. Secretary *Naunton*,
Mr. Chan. of the *Exchequer*.
Maſter of the *Rolls*.

" That in their Opinions it was fit a ſpecial Commiſſion ſhould be directed " unto certain Gentlemen indifferently ſelected out of all thoſe Parts, together " with the Mayor and ſome of the Aldermen of the Town of *Lenne*.

" And

" And the Names of the Commiſſioners being exhibited, and recommended " unto the Board by the ſaid Committees, they were allow'd of; and the Lord " Chancellor was pleaſed thereupon to give preſent Direction and Warrant for " a Commiſſion.

Concord. cum Reg.

Geo. Calvert.

The Names of the Commiſſioners.

Earl of *Arundel.*
Earl of *Northampton.*
Lord *Ruſſel.*
Lord *Carew.*

For *Northamptonſhire.*
- Sir *Francis Fane.*
- *John Brown*, Eſq;
- *John Wingfield*, Eſq;

For *Huntingtonſhire.*
- Sir *Robert Cotton.*
- Sir *Robert Bevill.*
- Sir *Oliver Cromwell.*

For *Cambr.* and the Iſle.
- Sir *Edward Peyton.*
- Sir *Miles Sandys.*
- Sir *Simeon Steward.*
- Sir *John Cutts.*
- *Richard Colvill.*

For *Lenne.*
- The Mayor of *Lenne. pro tem.*
- *Tho. Oxburgh*, Eſq;
- *Mathew Clark.*
- *John Wallis.*

For *Norfolk.*

Sir *Henry Willoughby*,	*Jeff. Cobb, jun.* Eſq;	
Sir *Ralph Hare*,	*Edward Paſton*,	*Robt Thorold*, Eſq;
Sir *Henry Spellman*,	*Tho. Dereham*,	*Robt Butler*,
Sir *Henry Bedinfield*,	*Sinolphus Bell*,	*Geo. Gauſell.*
Sir *Hamon L'Eſtrange*,	*Jo. Athow*,	
Henry Karvill, Eſq;	*Jeff. Cobb*, Sen.	
Robt Heath, Eſq;	*Richard Bendiſh.*	

" That the ſaid Commiſſioners ſhould conſider the Conveniency and Inconve- " niency of the ſaid intended Work; of the Charge requir'd for the finiſhing " thereof; of the Place where the ſaid Haven or River ſhall be ſtraitned; and " to what Proportion or Scantling the ſame ought to be.

" That if the Work be not found any way hazardous to the ſaid Town of " *Lenne*, or levels above or beneath the ſaid intended Strait, but that it be found " every way profitable to the End for which it was intended, that then they " may have Power by the ſaid Commiſſion to put in Execution, and to levy the " Charge ratably upon ſuch Land-owners or others, as by Law or Equity ought " to contribute towards the ſame, *&c.*

" And whereas there be divers Laws made in *Auguſt* laſt, upon view, by the " Commiſſioners of Sewers for opening the Rivers of *Welland* and *Nene*; which, " if they be not accordingly executed, the ſtraitning the Outfall of *Ouſe* at " *Lenne*, may prove prejudicial to the High-Countries, by reaſon that then they " will have no other Outfall into the Sea for their Waters than by this Courſe, " thereby overburthening the ſaid River of *Ouſe*, to the manifeſt Danger of " Marſh-Land, and the Parts of *Norfolk* adjacent: That therefore, however " the Commiſſion be now ſewed forth (which is meet to be done with all Expe- " dition) and the Commiſſioners to aſſemble, and the Buſineſs to be prepared; " yet that it be not executed ſo far forth, as to make any Strait at *Lenne*, except " according to the Laws aforeſaid, *Welland* and *Nene* be firſt opened, and then " to go forward. But on the other ſide, if there be any Neglect or Delay in the " Execution of the ſaid Laws of Sewers for opening the Rivers of *Welland* and " *Nene*, that then the Board be thereof preſently inform'd, and of the Perſon " in whoſe Default the ſame is not done, that ſome preſent Order may be taken " for their Coertion, and for the preſerving of Marſh-Land in the mean time, " and the Parts adjacent, from imminent Danger.

But this Commiſſion came to nothing, and the Haven was not ſtraitned; for as Mr. *Atkins* obſerves, there were great Doubts and ſtrong Reaſons, why 'tis impoſſible to recover the Outfall of *Welland* to its former Eſtate by the Induſtry of Man.

And tho' the Outfall of *Nene* had often been decreed to be digged and enlarged in Places of Default, yet 'twas not done, nor was *believed to be of Service if done*; becauſe all thoſe Dreins which uſed to take the Waters from the High Countries, and conveyed them to the River (by which Waters, the Silt of the Sea, which annoyeth the Outfalls, hath been kept back) were utterly decay'd, and without cleanſing them, no good Effect was to be expected; and tho' there were innumerable Preſentments and Decrees thereon, for the Scouring and Dikeing out thoſe Dreins, *&c.* yet becauſe the *Waters naturally fell towards Lenne*, the Country was diſcourag'd from attempting a Work of ſuch vaſt Expence, and great Uncertainty as to the Effect. And yet without doing this firſt, the ill Conſequence of the Dam made to ſtop the Waters of *Nene* at *Utwell* in *E.* I. Time, convinced them of the Impoſſibility of diverting the Courſe of that River from *Lenne* at that time, and the Outfall of *Wisbech* is more decay'd now than it was then. Thus the *Ouſe*, by the great Confluence of Water taking that Courſe, is made wider and deeper, and thereby render'd the fitteſt Receptacle for conveying to Sea the Waters of the Level.

As for theſe Reaſons, the Outfalls of *Welland* and *Nene* were not amended; the Commiſſioners had no Power to make a Strait at *Lenne*, and therefore the Haven was not ſtraitned.

Theſe great Bodies of Water thus continuing their Courſe ſtill through *Lenne*-Haven to Sea, the defenſive Banks of Marſh-Land, by which they paſſed, were thereby ſo rent and torn, and their Bottoms ſo undermin'd and ſhaken, that the People of thoſe Parts continued moſt grievouſly to complain; and by their Petition to the Lords of the Privy-Council, pray'd, that if the High Country Waters, which in Default of their proper Outfalls, unduly thither coming and oppreſſing them, could not be reſtrain'd from them; that then *the High Countries ſhould contribute with them toward the Charge of their Banks ſuſtaining*; *which thoſe Lords thought but juſt.*

Hitherto, I have obſerved to what great Width the River of *Great Ouſe* and Haven of *Lenne* grew, by the Waters of the Level taking this Courſe, in default of their antient Outfalls. I ſhall now prove, that as it was worn wider, it was alſo made deeper, and that it had a Depth proportionable to its Width.

Sir William Dugdale ſays, in his Hiſtory of Imbanking and Draining, that at *Salters-Lode* there was 10 Feet Fall of the Fenns to Low-water Mark; and 'tis elſewhere obſerv'd, that there was four Feet Water in the River at Low-water Mark. And at a View of Sewers, taken *June* 25, 1605, by Sir *Robert Bevill*, Sir *John Peyton*, Sir *Robert Wingfield*, Sir *Richard Cox*, Sir *Anthony Foreſt*, &c. At *Salter's-lode*, where *Nene* falleth into *Ouſe*, the Commiſſioners ſaid they obſerv'd a very great Fall; as they gueſs'd, ten Feet from the Soil of the Fenns to Low-water Mark, beſides the natural Deſcent of the Fenn-grounds, from the Uplands of *Huntingtonſhire* thither.

1423. And *Thomas* Duke of *Exeter*, 2 *Henry* VI. becauſe ſeveral Lands in *Upwell* and *Outwell* were ſurrounded (cauſed by the *New-powdike*, extending from *Well-ſholl* to *Salters-lode*) gave Leave to *Henry Wells*, Archdeacon of *Lincoln*, and others, to convey the ſaid Waters by Sewers to *Rightforth-lode*, and along *Rightforth-lode* to *Stow-lode*, and ſo into *Wiggenhale-Eea*, which carries its ſelf towards *Biſhops-Lenne*. This proves the Outfall at *Lynn* was very good 300 Years ago.

1611. And at a Seſſion of Sewers, holden at *Kings-Lenne*, *September* 26, 9. *James* I. it was ordained, that the Sluice at the end of *Rightforth-lode*, next the *Ouſe*, ſhould be taken up, and a larger ſet down, the better to drain thirteen hundred Acres of Low-land in *Upwell* and *Outwell*. And that the Sole of the ſaid Sluice ſhould be laid one Foot under the Low-water Mark of the ſaid River of *Ouſe*, as it uſually runneth about the end of *Auguſt*; and that there ſhould be two Tunnels, each four Feet wide, and ſix Feet deep, with ſufficient Sea-doors and Land-doors for the ſame.

The latter End of *Auguſt*, 1723. Mr. *Peter Bateſon*, *William Stafford*, Eſq; Captain *John Edwards*, and ſelf, ſunk and bored to find the Apron or Sole of the foreſaid Sluice, and we found it to lie ſix Feet 1 ½ Inch under Low-water Mark: We next meaſured the two Tunnels, and found each to be four Feet wide, as they

The Upright of the Sluice at the end of Rightforth-lode near Stow Bridge.

Fig. 1.



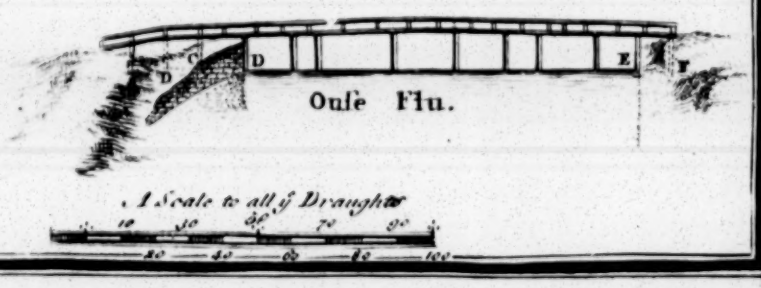
The Side View of the Sluice at the end of Hunts Drain between Stow & Magdalen.

Fig. 2.



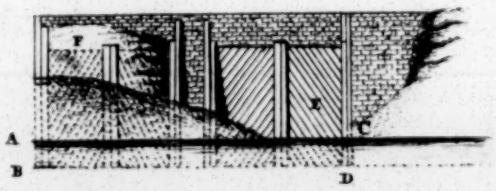
The Upright of Stow Bridge & width of ye River there

Fig. 3.



Front next the River of the Floodgates belonging to St. Johns Eea.

Fig. 4.



T. Badeslade delin

Fig. 1. Sheweth the Upright of the SLUICE *at* RIGHTFORTH LODE —— *At a Seſsion of Sewers holden at* Kings Lynn *Sept. 26. Anno 1611. it was Ordained that the* Sluice *at the end of* Rightforth Lode *nart the* OUSE *should be taken up, and a larger to be set down with two Tunnels each 4 feet wide & 6 feet deep. &c.* —— *The latter end of Augt. An^o 1723. We,* M^r. Peter Bateſon, Wm Staſford Eſq^r. Capt John Edwards *and* Tho: Badeſlade *: Digged and Bored to find how deep the Sole or Apron is lower than low water mark: We found the Original* Apron 8 f. 11 i. *lower.*

A. *The front of the remains of the* Sluice *as it then appeared nart the* Ouſe —— B. *the front nart the Land* —— MM. *the* Tunnels *each 4 f. wide & 6. deep* —— IK. *Low water mark as it was 113 Years agoe* —— HL. *Low water mark in the* OUSE *at the time this Experiment was made, which is 8 f. 11 i. higher than it was in the Year 1611.* —— KLPQ, *so high the Drain is filled up on the Land side* —— NO, *the Superficies of the Adjacent Land* —— *Hence it is apparent that Low water mark was heretofore at leaſt 8 f. 11 i. lower than it is now.* (M^r. Richd Atkins *an Eminent Comm^r. of Sewers whose Manuſcripts have always been allowed in Evidence ſays, that it was An^o 1618. 10 feet under Soil. Now it is higher than the Soil* —— C. *the side view of the s^d* Sluice —— CD. *the deſcent to the water* —— ED *low-water mark in Augt. 1725.* —— FG, *Low water mark 1611.* —— *This riſe of Low water mark & choaking up the River* Ouſe *was cauſed by the* Adventurers *making* Denver Dam 8 f. *higher than the bottom of the* OUSE, *and Building* Denver Sluices *upon the* Damm *croſs that* River *near* Salters Lode *to Stop the* Tides *out of the Rivers* OUSE STOKE, BRANDON MILDENHALL *and* GRANT; *and at the ſame time Built* Hermitage Sluices *croſs the* OUSE *near* Erith *and turned the* Freſh waters *of* OUSE *thro'* New Bedford River *which was cutt but 5 or 6 feet deep, whereas* OLD OUSE, *was at that time 14 feet deep* —— *In conſequence of the River* OUSE *being thus choaked up and Low water mark raiſed higher then the Soil of the* Country, *the* FENNS *which the* Adventurers *ſtand oblig'd to* Drain *are wholly* Drowned, *as are alſo near 60,000 Acres in* MARSHLAND *and in the* Hundreds *of* FREEBRIDGE *and* CLACKCLOSE, *which were before the* Adventureſhip *Rich* Meadow *and* Paſture Lands —— Navigation *is alſo by means thereof almoſt Deſtroy'd.* ——

Fig. 2. *Is the Side View of* Hunts Drain —— GD *was Low water mark formerly in the* OUSE — EF, *Low wat^r. mark now*

Fig. 3. *A Draught of* Stow Bridge *the* OUSE *was here about 150. wide before* Denver Sluices *were Built now not 120 wide* ABCD *and* EF *ſhews the incroachments that has been made* —— Fig. 4. *Front next the* OUSE *of the Floodgates belonging to* S^t. Johns Eea —— AC. *Low-water mark:* BD *the Apron of the* Sluice 2 f. *lower than Low-water mark:* S^t. Johns Eea *was cut 5 Miles long. 16 deep. 12 f. wide An^o. 1632 by the* Adventurers *at a vaſt Expence to gain a better fall for the Waters of the* South Level *but like the reſt of their* Works *did no Service.* ——

they were ordered to be made, but they were but three Feet four Inches deep; therefore it is plain, that the Sole of the ſaid Sluice has been raiſed two Feet eight Inches: ſo that the original Apron, had it been lying, would have been eight Feet nine Inches and a half lower than Low-water Mark is at this Time. (See the Draught of this Sluice.) And now there is not above ſix Inches Depth of Water in the River at Low-water Mark, whereas formerly there never was leſs than a Depth of four Feet at Low-water Mark here.

We alſo digged and bor'd to find the Sole of *Hunt*'s Sluice on the *North* Side of *Stow-bridge*, and found it to be eight Feet eleven Inches lower than Low-water Mark. See the Draught of this Sluice.

Theſe Experiments prove, that when theſe Sluices were ſet down, Low-water Mark in the *Ouſe* was at leaſt eight Feet lower than it is now.

Knights-gool, the great Drain for Marſhland, is another Inſtance of the ancient Depth of Low-water Mark, under Soil, or the Surface of the adjacent Lands.

For the Landholders on the *South* Side of *Wisbech* making Suit to the Landholders of Marſhland for draining of their ſurrounded Grounds, they having no other way ſo good as through *Knights-gool*. At a Seſſion of Sewers holden at *King's-Lenne*, *Auguſt* 16. 1640. it was order'd, That the Water in the ſaid Lands (being 1100 Acres by Eſtimation) ſhould and might from the 25th of *March* next after the Seſſion, to *November* 1. and ſo every Year, run their Water thro' a Pipe eighteen Inches ſquare, laid under the little River of *Wisbech*, alias *Elm* River, thro' divers Lodes to *Lords-bridge*, and thence to *Knight's-gool*, if the Country of Marſhland could ſo long bear it without Prejudice. *A. D.* 1640.

This ſhews the Outfall at *Knight's-gool* was then perfect and good, tho' now the Sluice-Doors are ſilted up by Sand lodged againſt them in the River, and kept ſhut thereby, ſo as that no Downfall-Water can be convey'd thro' them from off the Land into the *Ouſe*: And all *Wigenhall* and Marſhland Fens, and ſome Part of the *Smeth*, which, *Dugdale* ſaith, uſed to feed at leaſt 30,000 Sheep, beſides other Cattle, lie under Water for want of the Uſe of this Gool.

Sir *Clement Edmonds* in his Report made to the Lords of the Privy-Council, 1619. who being one of their Clerks was ſent down by thoſe Lords, at the Requeſt of the Commiſſioners of Sewers of the ſeveral Countries, to accompany the Committees in their View of the Outfalls, and to make his Report to that Honourable Board. Sir *Clement* ſaith,

☞ 'The River *Ouſe* coming along by the Town of *Bedford*, *Huntington* and *St. Ives*, 'and ſo paſſing down to his Outfall at *Lenne*, *is a goodly fair River throughout*, 'and *from below* Ely *downward runneth with ſuch a Current*, *that it is abſolutely* '*the beſt Sewer of all that Country*. And along by the River Side, 'tis a very rich 'Soil both in *Cambridgeſhire* and in the Iſle, well inhabited, and not otherwiſe 'much troubled with Water, but in Winter, and in Time of Floods; and would 'not have happened probably but for the Weeds, Weeres and Hardes in the Ri-'ver, which obſtructed the Paſſage of the Waters. For the Outfall of the River '*Ouſe* is ample and great, and gives large Paſſage for the freſh Waters deſcending 'from the Inland Countries: But then alſo too for the Sea, which cometh in with 'ſuch a Tide, eſpecially if a *Northerly* Wind blow, and meet with a Land-flood, 'that divers Towns in Marſhland are in Danger of being overflow'd and ſurround-'ed; and therefore by their Petition deſired, that the Haven might be ſtraitned in 'ſome Place near *Lenne* to keep out the Sea; alledging, that the ſaid Haven had, 'in the Memory of Man, been *narrower and ſhallower* than now it is, being of late 'grown to that *Breadth and Depth* by the great Fall of the freſh Waters that have 'left their ancient Chanels to follow that Stream.

And the Mayor and Townſmen of *Lenne* being made acquainted with their Petition, ſeemed to ſtand indifferent. But in reſpect of the great Conſequence, the Committees, ſays Sir *Clement*, forbare to give any Opinion therein, but left it to ſuch farther Conſideration as was requiſite.

Mr. *Richard Atkins* writes much to the ſame Purpoſe; and after adviſing the Hards about *Ely* to be removed, ſays, That 'tis his Opinion, the removing the Hards can never hinder Navigation, in reſpect of the great following Head of Water in *Ouſe*, which never will fail, but is much holpen by the flowing up of the Tides from *Lenne*: For below theſe Hardes to *Lenne*, where the *Ouſe* hath his Outfall, there never wanteth ſufficient Water for Navigation; but there is very often too much, proceeding of two Cauſes: One is, the River *Ouſe* it ſelf

bringing with it Waters out of *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, *Cambridgeſhire*, *Eſſex*, *Hertford*, *Bedford*, *Buckingham*, *Oxford*, and *Northamptonſhires*, cannot but afford great Plenty it ſelf. Another Cauſe is, That in regard or reſpect of the two Outfalls of *Welland* and *Nene* being decayed, moſt of their Waters follow this Stream, and forſaking their own Chanels, by many Miles labour to fall into *Ouſe*.

This Abundance of freſh Waters making their Paſſage by this Courſe, gave the Sea a more ſpacious Inlet; the one as it were preparing the way, and the other maintaining it with much Increaſe. Hence it cometh, that whereas in former Ages (as by good Reords appeareth) the Chanel of *Lenne-haven* was not above ſeven or eight Poles wide; now, notwithſtanding ſome Peers or Jetties within the Space of thirty Years laſt made for the Reſtraiat thereof, yet it is at this Day, ſaith Mr. *Atkins* (1618.) above forty Poles wide in the narroweſt Part.

And upon a View (of the Commiſſioners) of the Rivers *Glen*, *Welland*, and *Ouſe*, it was agreed, That *Lenne-haven, of all the reſt, for Wideneſs, Depth and Deſcent, was the beſt and moſt apt to receive the* Nene, *as well as the Waters of* Granta, *&c. and that That Outfall was ſo good, that it receiveth the Waters from all the others*; and were it not for Winter-Waters, it would utterly decay them.

Mr. *Goddard* (who was Recorder of *Lyn*) writes of the Haven and Chanel of *Lenne*, That at a Place called the *World's-end* in the Harbour, where Ships were wont to lie, there was not in any Man's Remembrance leſs than 10 or 11 Feet Water at Low-water Mark; and at a Place in the Haven, called *Mayor's-fleet*, eight or nine Foot depth at Low-water. And he farther ſaith, That tho' the Chanel to Seaward below the Haven was near half a Mile wide at Low-water, yet it was of a Depth ſufficient for a Ship of twelve Foot Water to be brought up in any one Tide without any Wind.

It being certain, from what has been ſaid, that the Haven of *Lyn* had been, for ſome Ages, ample and great, and very capable of emitting the freſh Waters, and admitting the Tides alternately: and that the Low-water Mark in the *Ouſe*, as far from Sea as *Salters-lode*, was ten Feet under Soil; of mere Conſequence the Tides muſt flow a long way into it, and into the Rivers branching out of it, to the great Advantage of Navigation.

Mr. *Goddard* ſaith the Tides put up into *Ouſe* about—48 Miles.

Into *Grant* about———	5	———————	48
Into *Mildenhall* about—	8	———————	42
Into *Brandon* about———	10	which is from *Lenne*	36 Miles.
Into *Stoke* about ———	6	———————	24
Into *Nene* about ———	7	———————	23

The Tide putting up ſo far into all theſe Rivers, and filling them twice in every twenty four Hours, they were not only competently ſupply'd with Water from Sea in the drieſt Seaſons to ſerve for the Inland Navigation, which by means of ſo many Branches is the moſt extenſive in *England*; ſo that Commerce and Trade was conſtantly maintain'd up the River *Nene* to *Well*, *March*, and *Peterborow*, above fifty Miles from *Lenne* into *Northampton*, *Rutland*, *Lincoln*, *Nottingham*, and *Leiceſterſhires*, with Veſſels of fifteen Tuns, which eaſily paſſed loaden in the drieſt Seaſons.

And up the River *Ouſe* they could ſail with forty Tuns Freight thirty ſix Miles at leaſt from *Lenne* at ordinary Neip-Tides; and great and conſtant Commerce was held to *Cambridge*, *Bedford*, &c. and between *Cambridge* and *St. Ives*, *Huntington*, *St. Neot*, *Bedford*, and Places adjacent, with a Burden of fifteen Tun, which is ninety Miles from *Lenne* by Water.

I ſay, the Rivers were not only ſupplied with Water for Navigation, but alſo the Tide putting ſo far up into all the aforeſaid Rivers, did raiſe the Waters in them much higher than their natural Situation, *e. g.* at *Salters-lode* they were raiſed at leaſt twelve Foot above Low-water Mark; and at *Harrimere* the Water was raiſed four Foot above their natural Situation, whereby when the Tide gave way they fell with great Weight and Rapidity, and were thereby made highly capable of grinding the Chanel, and ſcouring out the Silt to Sea. This large Receipt and Indraught of the Tides from Sea taken into all theſe Rivers, as into ſo many natural Receptacles, always furniſh'd a ſufficient Stock of Back-waters in the drieſt Seaſon, to preſerve the River, Haven, and Channel open, as Sir *Cornelius Vermuden* well obſerves. His Words are,

'The *Outfall of* Lenne *hath ſufficient Water to keep open his Channel*, and al-
'tho' in Summer the Sands in *Lenne-haven* overcome the Ebbs ſomewhat, yet they
'do not lye long, but the *firſt Land-waters, or next Spring-tides, carry them away*
'*again.* But as there are ſeldom any Land-floods in Summer, therefore it was *principally the Spring-tides that kept the Channel open in dry Seaſons.* And it is moſt certain that Land-waters alone cannot have force enough to keep open a Channel of near half a Mile in Width, as was that of *Lenne* below the Port; but the *Tides from Sea putting up into all the foremention'd Rivers*, and being in them at High-water of a great Breadth and Height, when this vaſt Quantity, received into theſe Receptacles, returned within the Compaſs of the Channel, it muſt neceſſarily be with ſuch a *Deſcent, and ſuch rapid Fury, as did not only maintain the Channel, but ſcour out the Silt and Sand, and enlarged it in Width and Depth*, as ſeveral Petitions and Preſentments witneſs: And that the Ebb did return in the Compaſs of the Channel, is as plain as it is natural; for by that time it was full Sea four or five Miles above *Salters-lode*, it was half Ebb at *Lenne-haven*, and the Rivers natural Receptacles of the Tides above *Salters-lode* ſtill drawing the Waters on, continued the Indraught, and occaſioned the Tide to flow forward ſome time after Pinch-water; ſo that before the Tide began to return or ebb at *Salters-lode*, the Waters were ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel at *Lenne-haven*; whereby the Tide, which ran up into the Rivers *Ouſe*, *Nene*, *Stoke*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Grant*, and which raiſed the Waters twelve Feet above their natural Situation at *Salters-lode*, returning with a great Deſcent in the Compaſs of the Low-water Channel, did forcibly ſcour out the Silt and Sand, and kept the Channel open, *&c.*

And the Land-waters being raiſed at *Harrimer*, &c. above their natural Situation four Feet, this great Head of freſh Water follow'd the retreating Tide, (having acquir'd this Deſcent) with ſuch Force, as ſcour'd out the Silt dropp'd by the Sea-flood; which, conſidering the perpetual Current of the Water, and violent Motion of the flowing and ebbing Tides, could not be much.

And that the Ebb of the Tide alone, excluſive of the freſh Waters, does ſcour and grind away to Sea the Silt brought up by the Flood, and principally maintain their Channel, is demonſtrable. The Harbour and Channel of *Wells* in *Norfolk*, is maintain'd and kept open by the Sea-water only (no freſh-Water River having its Outfall there) the Sea putting up its Tides into a great many Creeks, which occaſion a great Indraught; the Water being receiv'd into thoſe Receptacles, does in its Ebb keep open the Harbour, Channel and Pool; and tho' the Sea does leave ſome Sand in the ſaid Creeks during the Neip-Tides, and the Channel rather grows up than deepens, yet the next Spring-Tides overflowing a large Tract of Salt Marſhes, the ſaid Water, on the Retreat of the Tide, falling off thoſe Marſhes into the ſaid Creek, does drive out the Sand dropp'd in them during the Neip, with ſuch Force to Sea, that it grinds them and the Channel and Pool, and makes them deeper than they were before the Spring-Tides put up.

But ſince a conſiderable Number of Acres of Salt-marſh has been imbanked and taken in, adjoining to the Port of *Wells*, and ſeveral Creeks have had Banks run croſs them, which hinders the Neip-tide from putting up into thoſe Creeks, as they were wont to do, and alſo the Spring-tides from overflowing the Quantity of Marſh they uſed before to cover; the ſaid Harbour of *Wells*, its Channel and Pool, hath very ſenſibly decay'd, as have done all Channels that have been any ways depriv'd of their ancient Stock of Back-waters. Thus Mr. *Atkins* writes: "*Spalding* of old time was beſt of three Outfalls, now the worſt; loſt by win-
"ning certain ſeveral Marſhes to the Sea-ward.

Thus the Honourable Corporation of Adventurers ſet forth to the Parliament in their Reaſons, why *Sutton* Marſh below *Wisbech* ſhould not be inned, *A. D.* 1719. "That it is found by Experience, that the imbanking the
"Salt Marſhes, or gaining Land from the Sea, has been the principal
"Cauſe of the Chanel's being choak'd up, and have juſt Reaſon to be appre-
"henſive, that the imbanking any more will entirely deſtroy that Outfall to
"Sea, *&c.*" Thus alſo the Petition of *Rye* in *Suſſex* to the Parliament, 1701. ſets forth, "That of late Years ſeveral Perſons have inned ſeveral Acres of Land
"which belong to the ſaid Harbour, and have built Floodgates to ſtop the Flow
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bringing with it Waters out of *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, *Cambridgeſhire*, *Eſſex*, *Hertford*, *Bedford*, *Buckingham*, *Oxford*, and *Northamptonſhires*, cannot but afford great Plenty it ſelf. Another Cauſe is, That in regard or reſpect of the two Outfalls of *Welland* and *Nene* being decayed, moſt of their Waters follow this Stream, and forſaking their own Chanels, by many Miles labour to fall into *Ouſe*.

This Abundance of freſh Waters making their Paſſage by this Courſe, gave the Sea a more ſpacious Inlet; the one as it were preparing the way, and the other maintaining it with much Increaſe. Hence it cometh, that whereas in former Ages (as by good Reords appeareth) the Chanel of *Lenne-haven* was not above ſeven or eight Poles wide; now, notwithſtanding ſome Peers or Jetties within the Space of thirty Years laſt made for the Reſtraiat thereof, yet it is at this Day, ſaith Mr. *Atkins* (1618.) above forty Poles wide in the narroweſt Part.

And upon a View (of the Commiſſioners) of the Rivers *Glen*, *Welland*, and *Ouſe*, it was agreed, That *Lenne-haven, of all the reſt, for Wideneſs, Depth and Deſcent, was the beſt and moſt apt to receive the* Nene, *as well as the Waters of* Granta, *&c. and that That Outfall was ſo good, that it receiveth the Waters from all the others*; and were it not for Winter-Waters, it would utterly decay them.

Mr. *Goddard* (who was Recorder of *Lyn*) writes of the Haven and Chanel of *Lenne*, That at a Place called the *World's-end* in the Harbour, where Ships were wont to lie, there was not in any Man's Remembrance leſs than 10 or 11 Feet Water at Low-water Mark; and at a Place in the Haven, called *Mayor's-fleet*, eight or nine Foot depth at Low-water. And he farther ſaith, That tho' the Chanel to Seaward below the Haven was near half a Mile wide at Low-water, yet it was of a Depth ſufficient for a Ship of twelve Foot Water to be brought up in any one Tide without any Wind.

It being certain, from what has been ſaid, that the Haven of *Lyn* had been, for ſome Ages, ample and great, and very capable of emitting the freſh Waters, and admitting the Tides alternately: and that the Low-water Mark in the *Ouſe*, as far from Sea as *Salters-lode*, was ten Feet under Soil; of mere Conſequence the Tides muſt flow a long way into it, and into the Rivers branching out of it, to the great Advantage of Navigation.

Mr. *Goddard* ſaith the Tides put up into *Ouſe* about—48 Miles.

Into *Grant* about———	5	———————	48
Into *Mildenhall* about—	8	———————	42
Into *Brandon* about———	10	which is from *Lenne*	36 } Miles.
Into *Stoke* about ———	6	———————	24
Into *Nene* about ———	7	———————	23

The Tide putting up ſo far into all theſe Rivers, and filling them twice in every twenty four Hours, they were not only competently ſupply'd with Water from Sea in the drieſt Seaſons to ſerve for the Inland Navigation, which by means of ſo many Branches is the moſt extenſive in *England*; ſo that Commerce and Trade was conſtantly maintain'd up the River *Nene* to *Well*, *March*, and *Peterborow*, above fifty Miles from *Lenne* into *Northampton*, *Rutland*, *Lincoln*, *Nottingham*, and *Leiceſterſhires*, with Veſſels of fifteen Tuns, which eaſily paſſed loaden in the drieſt Seaſons.

And up the River *Ouſe* they could ſail with forty Tuns Freight thirty ſix Miles at leaſt from *Lenne* at ordinary Neip-Tides; and great and conſtant Commerce was held to *Cambridge*, *Bedford*, &c. and between *Cambridge* and *St. Ives*, *Huntington*, *St. Neot*, *Bedford*, and Places adjacent, with a Burden of fifteen Tun, which is ninety Miles from *Lenne* by Water.

I ſay, the Rivers were not only ſupplied with Water for Navigation, but alſo the Tide putting ſo far up into all the aforeſaid Rivers, did raiſe the Waters in them much higher than their natural Situation, *e. g.* at *Salters-lode* they were raiſed at leaſt twelve Foot above Low-water Mark; and at *Harrimere* the Water was raiſed four Foot above their natural Situation, whereby when the Tide gave way they fell with great Weight and Rapidity, and were thereby made highly capable of grinding the Chanel, and ſcouring out the Silt to Sea. This large Receipt and Indraught of the Tides from Sea taken into all theſe Rivers, as into ſo many natural Receptacles, always furniſh'd a ſufficient Stock of Back-waters in the drieſt Seaſon, to preſerve the River, Haven, and Channel open, as Sir *Cornelius Vermuden* well obſerves. His Words are,

'The *Outfall of* Lenne *hath ſufficient Water to keep open his Channel*, and al-
'tho' in Summer the Sands in *Lenne-haven* overcome the Ebbs ſomewhat, yet they
'do not lye long, but the *firſt Land-waters, or next Spring-tides, carry them away*
'*again.* But as there are ſeldom any Land-floods in Summer, therefore it was *principally the Spring-tides that kept the Channel open in dry Seaſons.* And it is moſt certain that Land-waters alone cannot have force enough to keep open a Channel of near half a Mile in Width, as was that of *Lenne* below the Port; but the *Tides from Sea putting up into all the foremention'd Rivers*, and being in them at High-water of a great Breadth and Height, when this vaſt Quantity, received into theſe Receptacles, returned within the Compaſs of the Channel, it muſt neceſſarily be with ſuch a *Deſcent, and ſuch rapid Fury, as did not only maintain the Channel, but ſcour out the Silt and Sand, and enlarged it in Width and Depth*, as ſeveral Petitions and Preſentments witneſs: And that the Ebb did return in the Compaſs of the Channel, is as plain as it is natural; for by that time it was full Sea four or five Miles above *Salters-lode*, it was half Ebb at *Lenne-haven*, and the Rivers natural Receptacles of the Tides above *Salters-lode* ſtill drawing the Waters on, continued the Indraught, and occaſioned the Tide to flow forward ſome time after Pinch-water; ſo that before the Tide began to return or ebb at *Salters-lode*, the Waters were ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel at *Lenne-haven*; whereby the Tide, which ran up into the Rivers *Ouſe*, *Nene*, *Stoke*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Grant*, and which raiſed the Waters twelve Feet above their natural Situation at *Salters-lode*, returning with a great Deſcent in the Compaſs of the Low-water Channel, did forcibly ſcour out the Silt and Sand, and kept the Channel open, *&c.*

And the Land-waters being raiſed at *Harrimer*, &c. above their natural Situation four Feet, this great Head of freſh Water follow'd the retreating Tide, (having acquir'd this Deſcent) with ſuch Force, as ſcour'd out the Silt dropp'd by the Sea-flood; which, conſidering the perpetual Current of the Water, and violent Motion of the flowing and ebbing Tides, could not be much.

And that the Ebb of the Tide alone, excluſive of the freſh Waters, does ſcour and grind away to Sea the Silt brought up by the Flood, and principally maintain their Channel, is demonſtrable. The Harbour and Channel of *Wells* in *Norfolk*, is maintain'd and kept open by the Sea-water only (no freſh-Water River having its Outfall there) the Sea putting up its Tides into a great many Creeks, which occaſion a great Indraught; the Water being receiv'd into thoſe Receptacles, does in its Ebb keep open the Harbour, Channel and Pool; and tho' the Sea does leave ſome Sand in the ſaid Creeks during the Neip-Tides, and the Channel rather grows up than deepens, yet the next Spring-Tides overflowing a large Tract of Salt Marſhes, the ſaid Water, on the Retreat of the Tide, falling off thoſe Marſhes into the ſaid Creek, does drive out the Sand dropp'd in them during the Neip, with ſuch Force to Sea, that it grinds them and the Channel and Pool, and makes them deeper than they were before the Spring-Tides put up.

But ſince a conſiderable Number of Acres of Salt-marſh has been imbanked and taken in, adjoining to the Port of *Wells*, and ſeveral Creeks have had Banks run croſs them, which hinders the Neip-tide from putting up into thoſe Creeks, as they were wont to do, and alſo the Spring-tides from overflowing the Quantity of Marſh they uſed before to cover; the ſaid Harbour of *Wells*, its Channel and Pool, hath very ſenſibly decay'd, as have done all Channels that have been any ways depriv'd of their ancient Stock of Back-waters. Thus Mr. *Atkins* writes: "*Spalding* of old time was beſt of three Outfalls, now the worſt; loſt by win-
"ning certain ſeveral Marſhes to the Sea-ward.

Thus the Honourable Corporation of Adventurers ſet forth to the Parliament in their Reaſons, why *Sutton* Marſh below *Wisbech* ſhould not be inned, *A. D.* 1719. "That it is found by Experience, that the imbanking the
"Salt Marſhes, or gaining Land from the Sea, has been the principal
"Cauſe of the Chanel's being choak'd up, and have juſt Reaſon to be appre-
"henſive, that the imbanking any more will entirely deſtroy that Outfall to
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"which belong to the ſaid Harbour, and have built Floodgates to ſtop the Flow
"and Reflow of the Tide up the River *Rother*, and thereby the ſaid Harbour
"grows worſe every Year.

And in the Act of Parliament for their Relief it is expreſsly ſaid, " That the " ſtopping the Flux of the Tide was the Cauſe of that Harbour being choaked " up; which Harbour was formerly of great Uſe and Benefit to Trade and Na- " vigation. So that for preventing the utter Loſs of the ſaid Harbour, it is ne- " ceſſary to open the ſame, and to let the Tide have free Courſe thro' certain " Sluices near to the ſaid Harbour, call'd *Scotch Flat-Sluice*, and *Craven-Sluice*, *&c.*

And that the Reflux of the Tide always forces out the Sands, is demonſtrable from the *Thames*, *Humber*, *Medway*, *Severn*, &c. their Channels being kept open by no other Means, whoſe Outfalls are ſo ample and great, that all the freſh Waters that come down thoſe Rivers are not in Quantity enough to cover the Bottom of their Channels at their Outfalls: 'Tis therefore plainly impoſſible that the freſh Waters can maintain their Channels; and it muſt be the Flux and Reflux of the Tides principally that maintains them in the vaſt Width and Depth they are of, *&c.*

Of this Opinion is Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*; he ſaith——" The *Ouſe*, from " *Littleport* to *Lenne*, keeps his Depth by reaſon of the Back-waters". And ſpeaking of *Boſton-Deeps*, he ſaith, " That the Floods and Ebbs of the Sea " maintain it. And further he ſaith, " The Reaſon why it keeps ſo deep, is, " that the Ebbs which come over the Sands which lie between *Norfolk* and it, " come that way, and ſo make a Deep there, which could not otherwiſe be poſſi- " bly maintain'd: It is not the River of *Welland* and that of *Boſton* could do it, " they are but ſmall Waters, and the leſs powerful when they come abroad into " a vaſt Place, where they are not to be diſcerned; ſo that if it were not for the " Ebbs of the Sea, it would ſoon decay.

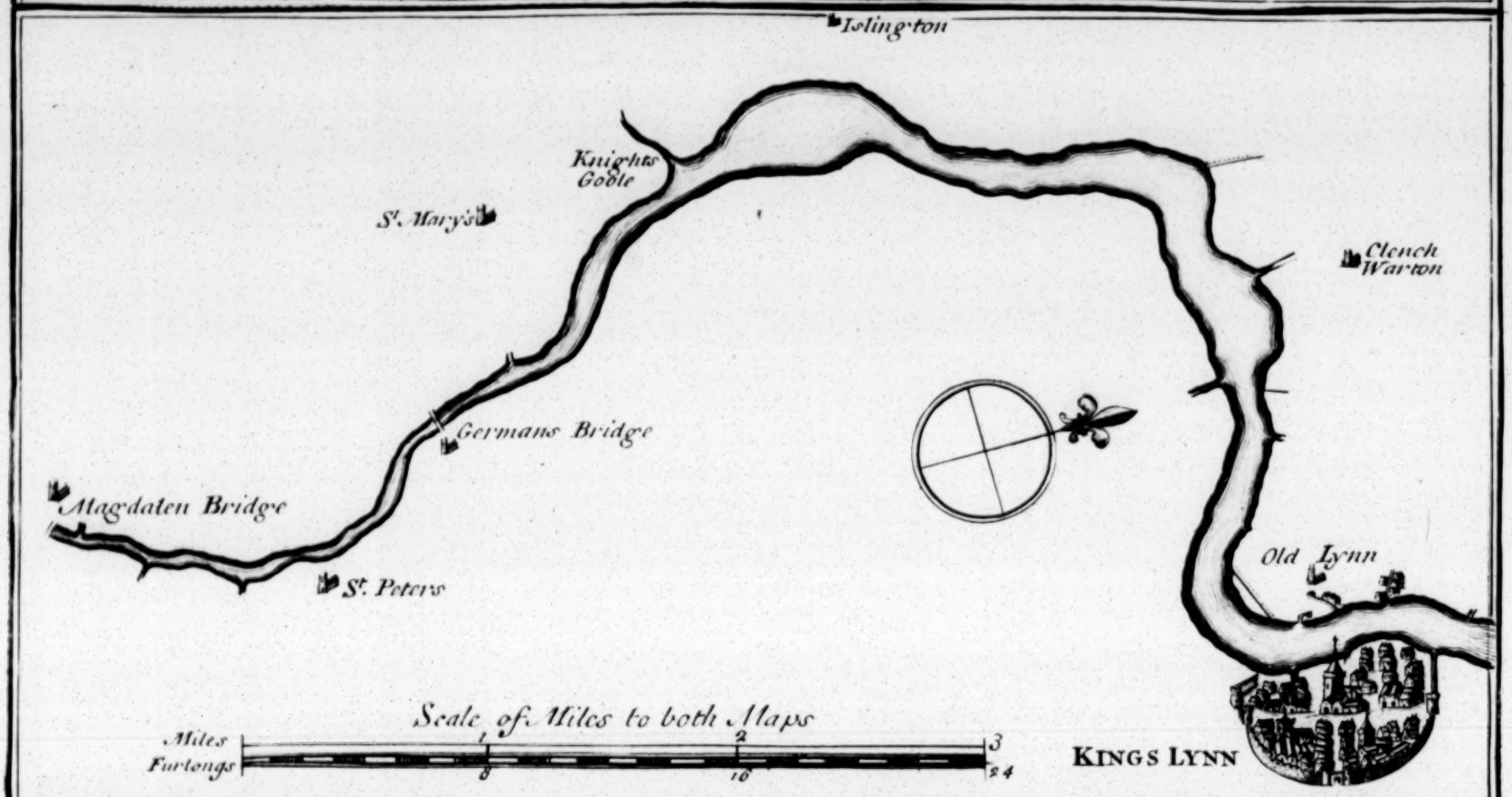
And that the Ebbs of the Sea do really cauſe the Effect here mention'd, and maintain a Depth where-ever their Reflux has Power to act, is apparent from the preſent State and Condition of *Lenne-haven* and Channel to Sea-ward: for tho' the River *Ouſe* is ſo ſilted and grown up above *Germans*, that all Paſſage by Boat and Navigation is loſt during the Neip-tides, yet the River being very wide between *Germans* and *Lenne*, and thereby capable of receiving a great Quantity of Water every Tide from Sea, the Ebb of that Water hath ſo preſerved and kept open the Channel to Sea-ward, that it is almoſt as good now, as it was within a few Years after *Denver* Sluices were erected croſs the River *Ouſe*, near *Salters-lode*. Thus by a like Receptacle for the Tides at *Yarmouth*, *Portſmouth*, *Oſtead*, and ſeveral Ports at home and abroad (as is between *Germans* and *Lynn*) are their Harbours and Channels chiefly kept open; and where Harbours have been depriv'd of their ancient Receptacles they have decay'd: Witneſs thoſe mention'd in the preceding Page.

Therefore it is more than probable, if the River from *Lenne* to *Germans* was no wider than it is from *Germans* upwards, the Haven of *Lenne* and Channel to Sea had been long ſince loſt and ſilted up as much as the River is above *Germans*, whereby no Ship of any conſiderable Burthen could have ſail'd up to *Lenne* at this time, but muſt have laid as far below that Port, as the Ships do below *Wisbech*.

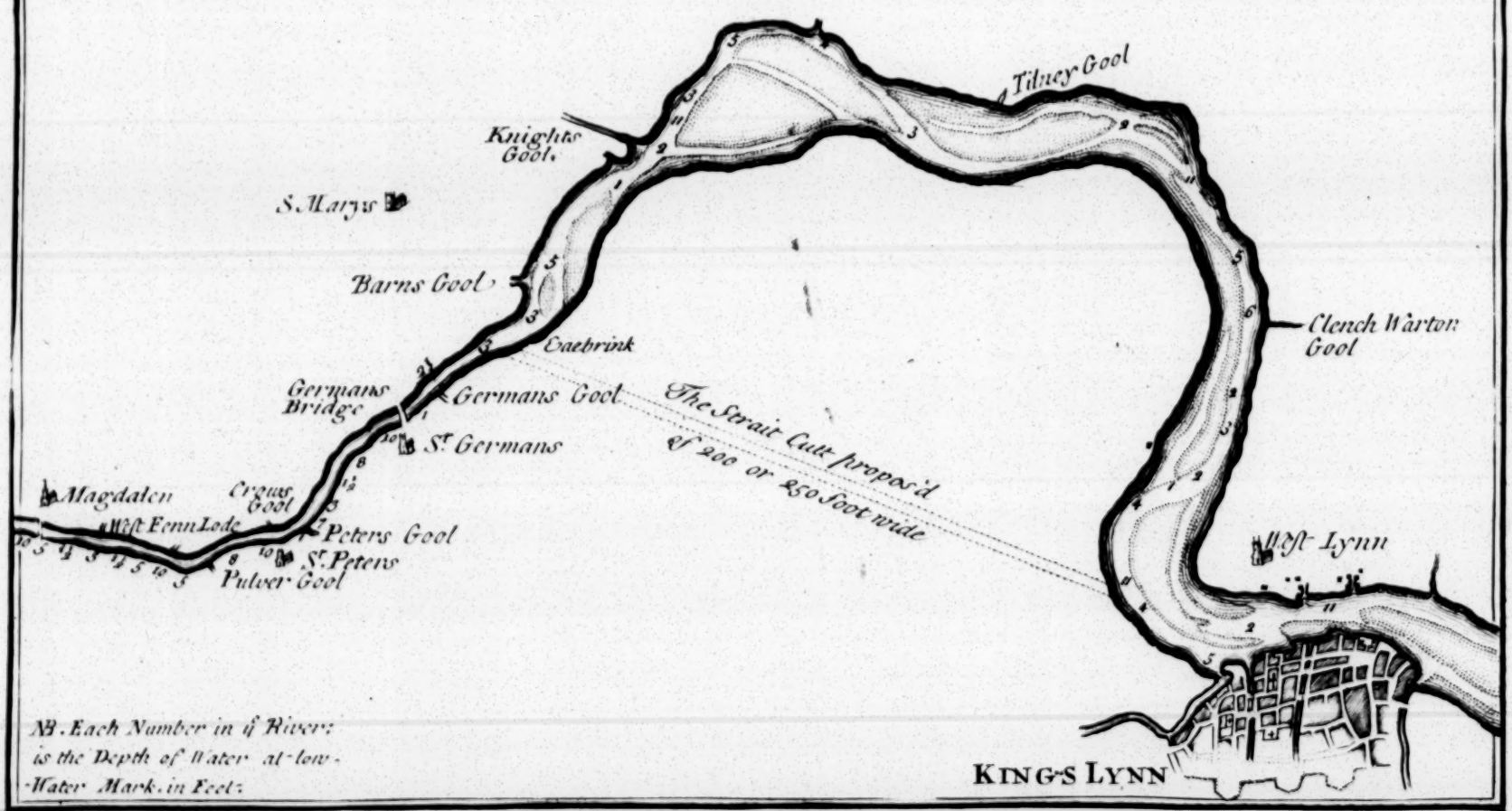
Having proved the Width, Depth and Goodneſs this River, Haven and Channel to Seaward, was of before the general Undertaking for Draining; I ſhall next ſhew Cauſe why the Fenns were ſurrounded, which gave occaſion to that general Undertaking; an Undertaking glorious in it ſelf; but unhappily, by taking wrong Meaſures, not judged to be ſuch then, but which Experience fatally proves now, have not only put thoſe very Lands they undertook to drain, into a worſe Condition than they were in before; but have alſo ſo far damag'd this once moſt famous River, that it is now render'd incapable of draining, and muſt in a very few Years be loſt to Navigation alſo, unleſs ſpeedy and proper Meaſures be taken to prevent an Evil, that will otherwiſe be the Ruin of *Lynn* and *Cambridge*, and of all the other Water Towns in theſe Parts; and alſo the total Drowning of the Province of *Marſh-Land*, the *Hundreds* adjacent, and that whole *great Level of the Fens*, which the Adventurers undertook to make good Winter Lands, and ſtand oblig'd to drain.

SECT.

A Map of LYNN-HAVEN, & of the River Ouse to Germans. Survey'd by Wm Hayward AD. 1607



A Map of LYNN-HAVEN, & of the River Ouse to Germans, made by T. Badeslade A.D. 1724



Some People maintaining that the Width of the River betwixt Lynn & Germans is the cause of its Shallowness and is prejudicial to Navigation & Draining, & as a remedy have propos'd deserting that Course & to make a strait narrow Cutt from Germans to Lynn; these Maps are laid down by the same Scale to shew that ye River was in some places as wide 120 Years ago when it was deep, as now it is Shallow — The Riv.r Ouse, Lynn-hav.n & ye Channels to Seaward did actually grow wider & deeper gradually for 800 or a 1000. to ye very time Denver Sluices were Erected, & they being Choaked up immediately after they were Built, so that Navigation & Draining were very much prejuced: it is Demonstrable those Sluices were ye cause, & not the Width of ye River betw.n Germans & Lynn ..... The Great Depth of the Channels at Low-water in the Thames Severn & Humber either of w.ch Rivers is near 10 times wider y.n Lynn Hav.n at the same distance from Sea shew ye the width of a River is not the cause of Shallowness in the Channel but naturally the means of its Deepning it: So ye had not Denver Sluices been Erected the Channel of ye Riv.r Ouse would have been much deeper now than it was 120 Years ago & been compleat for Navigation & Draining —— If the wide River betw.n Germans & Lynn should be deserted the Channel to Seaward will immediately be Choaked up, & become as difficult to Navigation as is Wisbech Channel & Draining will be wholly lost.

T. Badeslade Delin.

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Parker Sculp.

SECT. III.

Of the fruitful Condition of the Fens while the Outfall of Wisbech *was perfect: --- The Loſs of that Outfall prov'd to have been the Cauſe of this Low Country being ſurrounded: --- How it came to decay: --- Of the ſeveral particular Attempts made towards Draining in theſe Parts: --- Of the Care taken not to impair the Navigation of* Lyn, Cambridge, *&c. --- And of the Goodneſs of the River* Ouſe *during thoſe particular Attempts.*

THE Fens that are now, were ſometimes of the Nature of Land-Meadows (ſays Mr. *Atkins*) fruitful, healthful, and very gainful to the Inhabitants; and yielded much Relief to the High Countries in time of great Drought. The Truth of this is diſputed by ſome People, but they ſeem plainly to have been ſo; for *Peterborough* of old was call'd *Medehamſted* of the Meadows there, and not *Fenhamſted* of the Fens that now are; and yet unto it did moſt of the Fens belong. And *Ely* Fen, or *Peterbrough* Great Fen was Foreſt, whoſe Keeper had in it, in the New Marſhes, now called *Marſh-Fen*, an Incloſure for keeping of Sheep, and for mowing of Hay; and in *Wryde-croft*, a Manſion-houſe and a large Dairy-houſe. *Leland* and other ancient Writers are laviſh in the Praiſe of this once fruitful Country.

Sir *William Dugdale* ſaith, That this vaſt Level was at firſt firm and dry Land, and not annoyed with any extraordinary Inundation from the Sea, or Stagnation of the freſh Waters: Which, ſaith he, may perhaps ſeem ſtrange to many; but when it is well conſidered, that Timber-trees will not grow and thrive where Water for the moſt part ſtands; or in Moor, which in Tract of Time is bred and increaſed in ſuch moiſt Places; both the one and the other may with much Probability be granted. The Caſe being thus ſtated, it now remains for us to prove (continues he) that ſuch Trees have been heretofore bred and proſpered in ſundry Parts of this now Fenny Country; which is no hard Matter to do, divers Perſons yet living being able to teſtify, that in the late digging of thoſe Canals and Drains, which have been made for the Exſiccation thereof, great Number of Trees of ſeveral Kinds have been found, moſt of Oak and Fir, and few of them ſevered from their Roots; but of ſuch as be ſevered, their Roots are obſerv'd to ſtand in the firm Earth below the Moor, of which Sort I my ſelf have ſeen ſome that were taken up in the Fens near *Thorney*; and have had credible Information of Multitudes found in other Places.

In a Law of Sewers made the 29th of *September*, 1596. call'd *Neatmoor Law*, the Commiſſioners after enumerating the Cauſes why "theſe Fenny Grounds "did lye long ſurrounded, and ſo became unprofitable, which in former Time "have been dry and profitable, it is ſaid—And ſo they may be hereafter, if due "Proviſion be made.

And Sir *Henry Hobart*, Attorney-General to King *James* I. ſays, "That the "Grounds now ſought to be drained, are ſuch as naturally and anciently were "dry Grounds.

How this Country, which tho' lying flat and low (yet was not originally annoyed with any conſtant Stop of the freſh Waters, which might by overflowing and Stagnation make it Fenny) came to be ſurrounded in the manner it was before the general Undertaking to drain it commenced, I ſhall here endeavour to manifeſt.

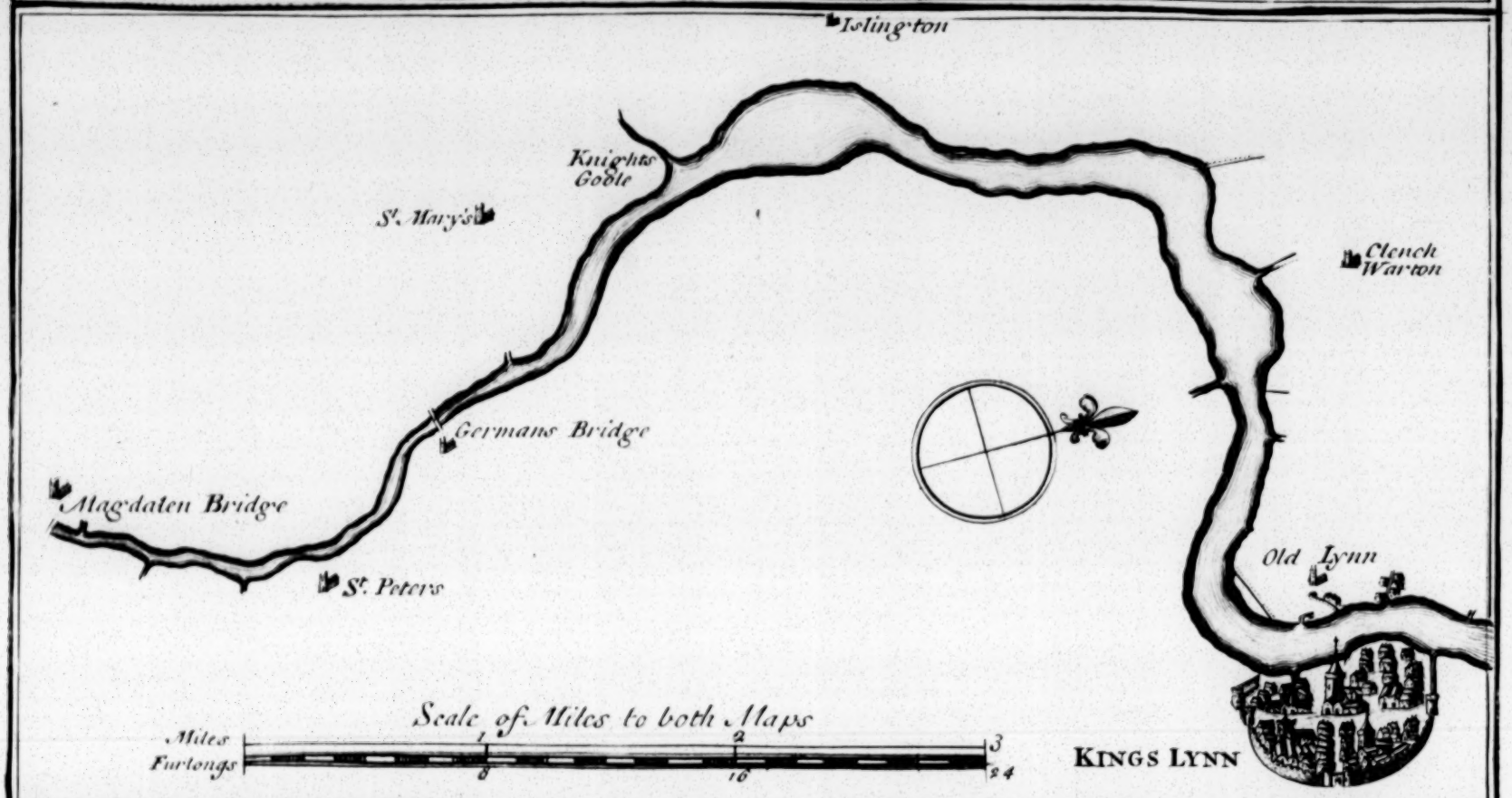
It may look like a Paradox to ſay that it was occaſion'd by Imbanking: But certainly it was, and by the not putting the Laws of Sewers afterwards in Execution; by Neglect whereof the principal Drains became uſeleſs to convey the Downfal-Water into the Rivers, and thereby the Outfall of thoſe Rivers themſelves were by degrees loſt.

The plainer to make this appear, I ſhall employ this Section in tracing the State of the Level from diſtant Times e'er yet it was imbanked, to the Time of the general Undertaking for the Draining thereof.

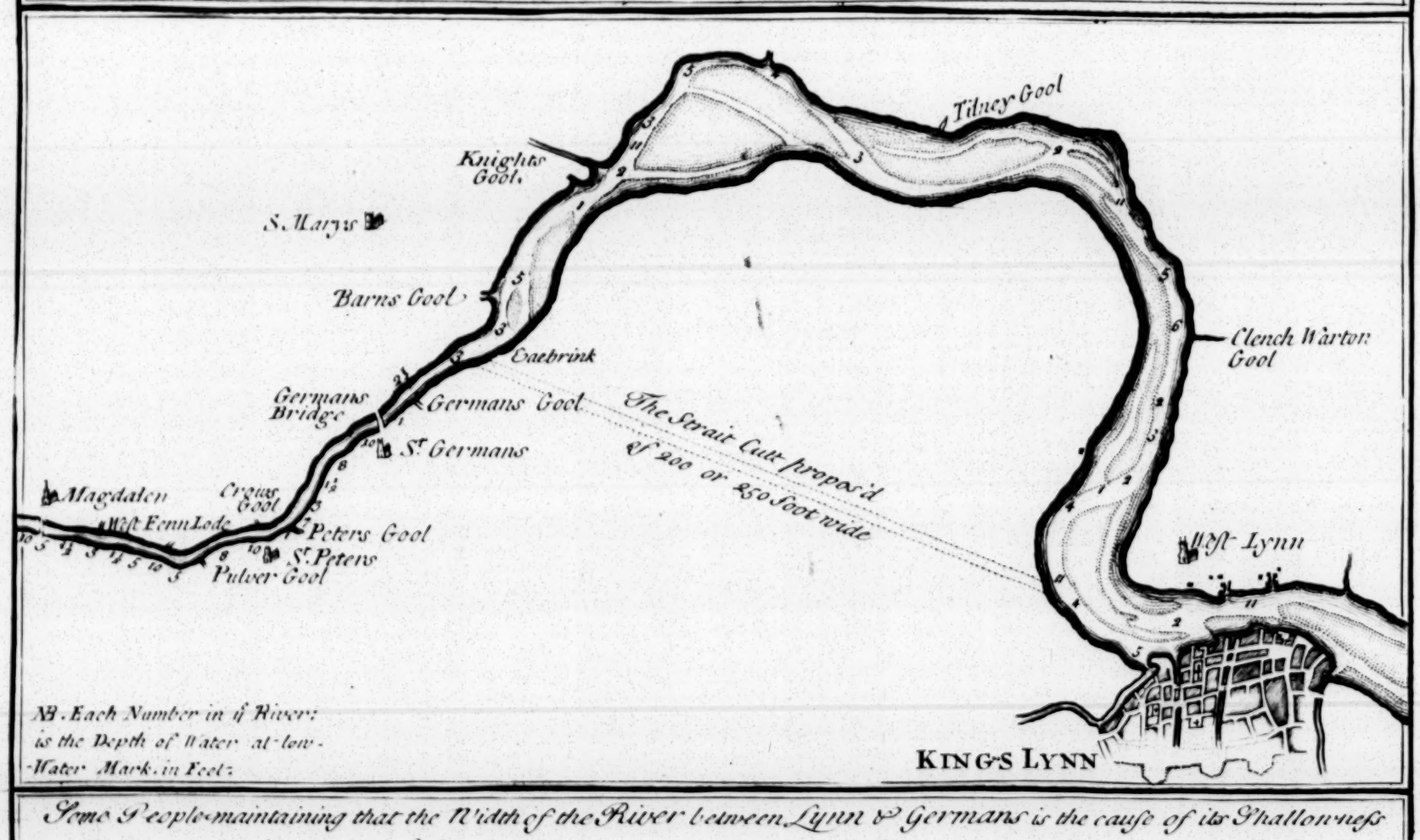
I have prov'd that the greateſt Part of the Level was anciently firm and dry Ground; but as the Courſe of the Rivers ſhew that this vaſt Plain has a hanging Level and gradual Deſcent to the Ocean, the Spring-Tides did overflow the loweſt Part of it, ſo as that it was in Nature Salt-marſh, till they were imbanked and defended from the Sea by a Colony of the *Romans* that had Reſidence in theſe Parts.

Theſe

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T. Badeslade Delin.

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Denbow Sculp.t

SECT. III.

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And Sir *Henry Hobart*, Attorney-General to King *James* I. says, "That the "Grounds now sought to be drained, are such as naturally and anciently were "dry Grounds.

How this Country, which tho' lying flat and low (yet was not originally annoyed with any constant Stop of the fresh Waters, which might by overflowing and Stagnation make it Fenny) came to be surrounded in the manner it was before the general Undertaking to drain it commenced, I shall here endeavour to manifest.

It may look like a Paradox to say that it was occasion'd by Imbanking: But certainly it was, and by the not putting the Laws of Sewers afterwards in Execution; by Neglect whereof the principal Drains became useless to convey the Downfal-Water into the Rivers, and thereby the Outfall of those Rivers themselves were by degrees lost.

The plainer to make this appear, I shall employ this Section in tracing the State of the Level from distant Times e'er yet it was imbanked, to the Time of the general Undertaking for the Draining thereof.

I have prov'd that the greatest Part of the Level was anciently firm and dry Ground; but as the Course of the Rivers shew that this vast Plain has a hanging Level and gradual Descent to the Ocean, the Spring-Tides did overflow the lowest Part of it, so as that it was in Nature Salt-marsh, till they were imbanked and defended from the Sea by a Colony of the *Romans* that had Residence in these Parts.

These

Theſe Colonies were ſo excellently diſciplin'd, that for avoiding the Miſchief which Idleneſs produceth, they were always exerciſed in ſome neceſſary Employment, or publick Work.

Theſe active and induſtrious *Romans*, who made uſe of all Art and Skill to the Advancement of their Profit, obſerving theſe Salt Marſhes to be very fertile, and to lye above the Reach of the ordinary Tides, beſtow'd the Pains and Coſt (ſays *Dugdale*) to raiſe a ſtrong Bank of Earth on that ſide the Level towards the Ocean, to defend it from the overflowing of the Spring-tides; by which means, the Countries of *Holland* and *Marſhland* were won and gained.

That the Level was not perpetually ſurrounded with freſh Waters, nor univerſally overflow'd by the Sea, but only part of it by Spring-tides, is plain from *Marſhland* and *Holland* being imbanked, and alſo from the State of *Romney Marſh* in *Kent*, ſubject to be over-flow'd by the Sea: which *Romney Marſh*, of about 24000 Acres, was taken in by the *Romans*, in the ſame manner as *Marſhland* and *Holland*, but long before them; as appears from its Laws being made the Standard, whereunto all the other Marſhes and Fenns in this Nation were to conform.

Romney Marſh, tho' taken in long before this Level, continues drained, and is at this Day as rich Land as any in the Kingdom; it muſt ſeem ſtrange therefore, that *Bedford-level* ſhould be totally ſurrounded, when *Romney Marſh* is in ſo good Condition. But the Reaſon I take to be,

Succeeding Ages following the Example of the *Romans*, more and more of this Level hath been continually taken in and imbank'd, and by thoſe Banks the High-country Waters were kept from the Sea, whither the very Deſcent of the Country would carry them, if theſe Banks were not: which our good Commiſſioners of Sewers of old time foreſeeing, did enjoin the Makers of thoſe Banks, to make, keep and maintain Gooles or Helps, both for the Safety of their Banks, and for the better Conveyance of the Waters. Thus in the Bank from *Croyland* to *Guyhirne*, there was one Help at *Dowſdale*, and another at *Clowes-croſs*; both which (ſaith Mr. *Atkins*) are ſince decay'd, by the Negligence or Sufferance of later times.

And the deſcending of the Land-waters to Sea have been ſtill more and more obſtructed by the Length of Banks being increaſed by *Biſhops-bank*, *Needham-bank*, *Well-bank*, and lately *Turks-bank*.

It was preſented by a Jury for the Iſle of *Ely*, 25. *Sept.* 41. *Eliz.* That *Turks-bank*, containing in Compaſs about five Miles, would be a great Hinderance to the Fall of many Waters flowing toward the Sea through the Iſle of *Ely*; it being planted between the two moſt natural Drains on that ſide the Iſle, *&c.* Therefore 'twas order'd that the ſaid *Turks-bank* ſhould be preſently cut.

And the like Effects theſe Banks have wrought upon the Fenns now (Meadows once): The Banks to be made, may in time to come work upon the Upland Meadows (ſays Mr. *Atkins.*) This Experience hath ſhewn, for before the Old Powdike was made to fend off the Land-waters (7. *Hen.* III. *Anno* 1223.) from *Marſhland*, the lower Part of that Province was no better than Marſh. For the Banks that defended Marſh-land from the Sea, hinder'd the Downfall from getting to Sea; ſo that the Waters deſcending, the higher ſtagnated in the lower Grounds for want of Gools and Helps to paſs it away to the Outfall. Sir *William Dugdale* ſaith, by an antient Pleading it appeareth, that before the 27th of *Henry* I. (600 Years ago) there was neither Habitation nor Ground that yielded Profit within that Part of *Wiggenhale*, from *Buſtards-dole* unto the South-ſide of the ſaid Town, except the Monaſtery of *Crabb-houſe*, with ſome Lands belonging thereto, all being then waſte, and in the nature of Fenn: And I find that when the old Powdike was much torn and broken by the Weight of the Land-waters on the South-ſide againſt it, that great Part of *Marſhland* was overflow'd by the freſh Waters: And becauſe the ſaid Powdike was judged by the Commiſſioners of Sewers, 1. *Hen.* VI. incapable of being mended, on acoount of the weakneſs of the Ground whereon it ſtood: Therefore *Anno Dom.* 1422, the New Powdike was ordain'd and decreed to be made; and accordingly it was made, and extended itſelf from *Salters-lode* to *Well-ſholl*.

Old Powdike.

New Powdyke.

Hereupon the Land South of this new Bank became overflow'd: for I find *April* 2. *Anno* 1423, that *Thomas* Duke of *Exeter*, &c. (becauſe ſeveral Lands in *Upwell* and *Outwell* were ſurrounded, cauſed by the new Powdyke) gave Leave to *Henry Wells*, Archdeacon of *Lincoln*, and others, to convey the Waters by Tunnels under the ſaid Powdyke thro' *Rightforth-lode* into *Wiggenhall Ea*, which carries it ſelf towards *Biſhops-Lenn*.

And certain it is that the Powdyke, and the other defenſive Banks beforenam'd, were made purpoſely to defend the Low-lands from the Floods deſcending from the High-lands: For by their Imbanking againſt theſe Floods, they had only their own Downfall-water to run off, which they did through Drains and Gools into the Rivers almoſt the whole Time the Tide in its Ebb is retreating to Sea; and thereby they kept the Land ſo imbanked dry, as well Winter as Summer.

But then theſe Banks, while they ſaved the Low-grounds they encompaſs'd, from being ſurrounded, they drowned the Lands on the other ſide of them, and made them Low-grounds, in reſpect of the remaining Part of the Level: ſo that in effect they have drowned more than they have ſaved, and made their Gain by others Loſs. And this is Matter of Fact, for Marſhland and the North-level were, by being thus enclos'd with Banks, made good Winter-grounds; but then the Land South of their Banks, became only Summer Land, unleſs in very dry Years. However, good Summer Grounds they continued to be while the Sewers and the Outfall at *Wisbech* were good; but later Times neglecting the Drains, and *Wisbech* River being imbanked againſt the Sea; and thoſe Banks, eſpecially from *Wisbech* upwards, built upon (as the *Ouſe* is at *Germans*, *Magdalen*, *Stow*, and *Downham*) and by Incroachments, made too narrow; as it alſo was at *Wisbech* it ſelf, inſomuch that at the time of the Attempt for the general Draining, ſeveral Houſes were bought to be pulled down, in order to make the River there wider, as appears by Receipts for Money paid by the Earl of *Bedford*, Lord *Gorges*, &c. *Anno* 1637. I ſay 'tis certain that the River, by theſe Encroachments, was made ſo narrow, that the Land Floods when they came down in the Winter Seaſon could not find Paſſage to Sea; ſo that for want of room to get away, they were enforced to overflow the Level during that Seaſon; and in very wet Years, continued to ſurround it all the Summer, becauſe all the Sewers, Drains, Petty-drains, *&c.* (ſaith Mr. *Atkins*) within the Fenns, were ruinous and utterly decay'd, which were the principal Conductors and Guiders of the Waters into the main Streams; which have grown up for want of Dyking and Scouring, and the Waters have been obſtructed by placing of Weers, Stamps, and divers ſuch Impediments, to the general Hurt of the whole Country, not only in theſe Petty-drains, but even in the very main Streams themſelves: whereof I ſhall give many Inſtances.

Sir *William Dugdale* ſaith, It hath been a long receiv'd Opinion, as well by the Borderers upon the Fenns, as others, that the total Drowning of this great Level hath, for the moſt part, been occaſion'd by the Neglect of putting the Laws of Sewers in due Execution in theſe later Times.

And *Atkins* ſaith, ſpeaking of *Wisbech:* This pitiful Outfall proceedeth of Neglect, in not Scouring and Dyking the River, nor preſerving and maintaining the Petty-ſewers and Drains which antiently fed the ſame, by enforcing the Waters thereof, and keeping them in their proper Courſe; whereby the Sea finding but little Reſiſtance (nor Strength of a following Head of Water to ſcour the Channel continually) ſilted up the River and Outfall: ſo that tho' of antient Time Ships of great Burden reſorted to *Wisbech*, yet for theſe Cauſes the Outfall ſo ſilted up, that as long ſince as King *John*'s Time, above five hundred Years ago the Channel was ſo ſhallow, that People could paſs over at Low-water.

This Outfall thus decay'd, the Waters of *Great Ouſe*, which paſſed through the Iſle of *Ely* in two Branches, the firſt Branch, call'd the Weſt-water, from *Erith* by *Chateris* to *Benwick*, where it met a Part of *Nene*, deſcending under *Horſey-bridge*, through the *Meres*, to *Benwick* aforeſaid, and they concurred in one Courſe to *March-bridge*, and ſo to *Upwell*; where they met with the other Branch of *Ouſe*, which fell from *Erith* to *Harrimere*; and after receiving the River *Grant* (from *Cambridge*) paſſed united to *Ely*, thence to *Littleport-chair*, and ſo by *Wellney* to *Upwell* aforeſaid, and from thence both Branches ran united to the North-ſea, by *Wisbech*, while that Outfall was good and perfect. But that decaying, and *Wisbech* River being neither deep enough nor wide enough to receive and paſs away theſe great Bodies of Water; the *Weſt-water*, or firſt Branch of *Ouſe*, with *Nene* united, which fell down partly by *March* to *Well*, not finding Paſſage through *Well* to *Wisbech*, did at *Shrewiſneſs* and *Well* moſt part thereof turn towards *Littleport* and *Salters-lode*, overflowing in its way all the low Grounds in the Iſle of *Ely*. *See* Hayward's *Map*, *made* Anno 1604.

Then ſaith Mr. *Atkins*, As it ſeemeth there was not any River between *Litport-Chair* and *Rebeck*, but all the Lodes, Lakes and Dykes, as St. *Edmonds-lode*, *Gnat-lode*, *Dockey-lode*, &c. took their natural Fall into a great Mere near *Well*, call'd the *Wyde*; and from the *Wyde*, by divers Tracts, as *Webwinch-lake*, *Aldy-lode*, *Small-lode*, *Cheſſelbeech*, *Waxbech-lode*, &c. into the River at *Upwell*, and thence with the Branch of *Ouſe* from *Littleport* to the North-ſea by *Wisbech*.

This was the Courſe of thoſe Waters while the Outfall was good; but that decaying, and in conſequence thereof, great part of the Level being overflow'd in times of Floods, and kept for the moſt part ſurrounded; Means were found, ſaith Mr. *Atkins*, to let *Great Ouſe* fall from *Littleport-Chair* to *Rebeck*, ſee from *A* to *B* in *Hayward*'s Map, (by a Lode, which at firſt ſeemed to be called * *Hemmings-Eea*) into *Ouſe-parva*, which has its Courſe to *Salters-lode*, and thence to the North-ſea by *Lenne*, whoſe Haven and Channel before that time was not above ſix Poles wide. But after *Wisbech* Outfall decay'd, *Lyn-haven* was worn wider by degrees, by the Action of the Tides and Force of the freſh-Waters deſcending that way; for beſides the Waters of *Old Ouſe* having this new Paſſage given them to Sea, the River of *Nene* led its Waters alſo this way, *e.g.* from *Peterborow* to *Ramſey*, thence to a decay'd River in *March*, call'd *Great Croſs*, thence to a decay'd Sewer call'd *New Leame*, thence to a certain Place in *Upwell*, call'd *Shrewyſneſt-point*; and there the ſaid River divided itſelf into two Branches, whereof the one returned S. E. and was called the *South Branch*, unto a certain old decay'd Sewer in *Welney Hamlet*, call'd *Maydlode*, and from thence to another old decay'd Sewer between *Welney* and *Littleport*, call'd *Newdyke*, and from thence into *Ouſe* at *Littleport-Chair*, after a Circuit of fifty four Miles. (See the old Map of the Fenns, done by *Hayward*, *An.* 1604.)

The North Branch deſcended from the ſaid Place call'd *Shrewyſneſs-point*, unto a certain Place in *Outwell*, called *Outwell-ſholl*, and from thence Southward unto a certain Place called *North-delph*, and from thence Eaſtward unto *Salters-lode*, and there into the great River, and by that Courſe to Sea through *Lenne-haven*.

Thus the Waters of *Nene* were forced to take in a manner their full Flow and whole Courſe contrary to their wonted Avoidance, at *Wisbech*, by reaſon of the Decay of the Sewers, called the *Great Croſs*, the *New Leame*, &c. The Decay of which ſaid ſeveral Sewers, with the Rivers, Lodes and Drains from them, extending unto the ſaid Town of *Wisbech*; and in conſequence thereof, the Decay of *Wisbech* Outfall itſelf, was the Cauſe of drowning and deſtroying the adjacent Country: And thus the Waters of *Nene*, in default of their proper Outfall, deſcending to Sea by *Lenne*, *Wisbech* Channel, and ſo as low as the Croſs-Keys, thereby utterly decay'd.

Great Ouſe having this new Courſe and Outfall given it, the Waters went off the Level much better than before; but (ſtill) the Channel of *Lenne* being but ſeven or eight Poles wide, it was not capable of receiving all the Water that wanted to deſcend that way; which indeed were all the Waters of the Level, the Deſcent being to this River at leaſt ſix Inches *per* Mile. And therefore the Waters of *Nene* (as well as thoſe of *Ouſe*) which endeavour'd to run part through *Well-Creek* to *Salters-lode*, and part with the *Weſt Water* to *Littleport*, and ſo towards *Lenne*, the *Ouſe* and *Lenne-haven* not being then wide and ample enough to receive them, they ſtill continued to ſurround the Level in Winter, and in time of Floods: and they were enforced to do ſo the more, becauſe all the antient Sewers were made to drain into *Wisbech* River; but now the Courſe of *Great Ouſe* being to *Lenne*, they could be of no uſe to convey any Water of the Level into this new Courſe. And therefore 21. *Edw.* I. Dams were order'd to be made, to force part of theſe Waters to *Wisbech* again; but in vain! And in the ſame King's Reign, Biſhop *Langtone*, to keep the Waters of the River *Nene* from drowning his adjacent Lands, made a Dam at *Utwell*, to turn the Waters to *Wiſbech*, but they could not get Paſſage that way to Sea faſt enough; and therefore they roſe high on the Level, and drowned, as appears by the Preſentments of Jurors ſworn, 40000 Acres of Marſh Ground in *Holland-fenn*, 2000 Acres of Land belonging to the Abbey of *Croyland*, 7000 Acres of Meadow, Marſh and Paſture, of *Deeping-fenn*, *Burgh-fenn*, and *Spalding-fenn*; as alſo the Marſhes of *Keſteven* were therefore overflow'd and drown'd. And a great Portion of Arable, belonging to all the Towns between *Fenn-draiton* and *Benwick*, unto *Utwell*, and

A Dam at Utweli.

Parts

* A le Chair per Heminges-lode uſq; Gnat-lodes end, *p.* 112. *lib. mei de ſcrip. forinſecis.*

Parts adjacent, for Length and Breadth above thirty Miles, were commonly overflow'd and drown'd every Year hereby. And all the Land from the Town of St. *Neot*, lying adjacent or near to the River *Ouſe*, in Length thirty Miles, and in Breadth ten Miles, more or leſs, unto the Town of *Benwick*, where the River of *Ouſe* and *Nene* have their Confluence. And likewiſe the Land and Meadows of all the Towns between *Aylington*, unto a Place called *Fuſtcote in the Fenn*, which is ſixteen Miles, in Flood-time were overflow'd and drown'd by means hereof. And the Marſhes of *Burgh-fenn*, *North-fenn*, *Frokenholt-Fenn*, and all the Land, Meadow and Paſture adjacent to thoſe Fenns, were overflow'd and drown'd when any Flood of Waters happen'd, in regard the ſaid Waters could not paſs, as before they had done.

And the Jurors being ask'd how much the ſaid Land was then more worth annually than it had been before the ſaid Stop was ſo made? They anſwer'd, forty Pound by the Year. Hereupon the Sheriff of *Norfolk*, &c. had Command to pull the ſaid Dam down: And 5. *Edward* III. it was removed, to the Relief of the aforeſaid Country, *&c.* ANNO 1331. *The Dam pulled down.*

The Waters going all to Lenne again, and the River Ouſe *and its Outfall being made wider and deeper by degrees, by the Tides and this great Confluence, they became a good Receptacle for great part of the Fenn-waters:* But all the Sewers having been of antient Time made to drain into *Wisbech* River, the Waters of the Middle and North Level could not get to this Outfall otherwiſe than round about by *Littleport*, and through *Well-Creek*, and each of theſe Outlets wanting (the firſt) Deſcent, the ſecond Width enough, to convey into *Ouſe* the Waters of *Nene*, &c. the Low-land in the Iſle of *Ely* (particularly) continued drowned. Therefore, and becauſe the Inhabitants of Marſhland petition'd that the Waters might be ſent their old Courſe by *Wisbech*, becauſe their Banks were in danger to be torn by the great Quantity of Water deſcending to *Lenne*, King *Richard* II. 1401. commiſſion'd *John Candiſh*, *John Holt*, *Thomas Pinchbake*, and others, to inform themſelves about the State of the Country, and to cauſe to be repair'd the Walls, Gutters, Dykes, Bridges, Gotes and Sluices upon the Sea-coaſt, and about the Fenns in the Towns of *Ely*, *Downham*, *Littleport*, *Haddenham*, *Sutton*, *Chatteris*, *Doddington*, *Marchford*, *Whittleſey*, *Elme*, *Well*, *Wisbech*, &c. in the Iſle of *Ely*, in the County of *Cambridge*; they being, through the Rage of the Sea, and the Overflowing of the Freſh waters to divers Places in the Parts aforeſaid falling to the Sea, ſo rent and broken, that many ineſtimable Loſſes, for want of repairing them, have happen'd: And theſe Commiſſioners were to ſee them repair'd, at the Charge of the Landholders, according to the Cuſtom of the Country.

And the Dykes, *&c.* being preſented by Jurors upon Oath, they were ordain'd to be made good; and ſeveral Things were order'd to be done for the ſaving of the Towns of *Elme* and *Well*, by cleanſing the old Drains, *&c.* to convey the Waters from off the Level to *Wisbech:* But nothing was done herein. For,

The 16th of *Henry* VI. *Gilbert Haltoft*, one of the Barons of the *Exchequer*, 1438. and dwelling about *Well*, in the Iſle of *Ely*, procured a Commiſſion for the Draining of the Country; and accordingly proceeded in making Laws. Haltofts *Commiſſion.*

He decreed, That all Stamps, Dams and Engines, that were in the River of Wisbech, *by the which the Water was any ways ſtayed, ſhould be taken up; and that none for the future ſhould make ſuch Stamps, Dams, Weeres, or other Engines from* Guyhirne *to the Sea, under the Pain of five Pound, to be levied by the Biſhop of* Ely.

He alſo ordain'd, that all the Sewers of every Townſhip of Wisbech-hundred, *ſhould be well, and in all Places from the Fenn-dyke, unto the Sea-dyke, digged and cleanſed; ſo that the Water might have its Courſe to the Sea without any Stops.*

And he alſo decreed the River of Wisbech *to be enlarged and digged in Places of Default, from* Guyhirn *to the Sea.*

But either nothing was done herein, and theſe Laws were not put in Execution; or elſe if they were executed, the Waters could not get to Sea by *Wisbech*, but ſtill continued to annoy the Level. For,

In *Henry* VII. Time, *John Morton*, Biſhop of *Ely* and Lord Chancellor of *England*, for the more ſpeedy Conveyance of the Waters from out of the Iſle of *Ely*; 1490. Morton. Leame. which Waters, in defect of their antient Outfalls by *Spalding* and *Wisbech*, much annoyed the Body of the Iſle, by being forced to take their Paſſage ſome by *Wittleſey-dyke*, ſome by *Horſey-bridge* into *Wittleſey-Meer*, thence into *Ramſey-*

meer, and ſo round about; ſome falling towards *Wisbech* by *Great-croſs* and *Plant-water*, and other ſome by *March* to *Well*, and through *Well-Creek* to *Salters-lode*, and there into *Ouſe*; and other ſome by *Wellney* to *Littleport*, and there into *Ouſe*, overflowing the Iſle in their way. (*See* Hayward's *Map*.)

The Biſhop to prevent the Waters of *Nene* from coming into the Iſle of *Ely*, cut a new River 40 Feet wide, and 14 Miles long; beginning at the high Grounds within a Mile of *Peterborow*; and continued it to *Guyhirn*, a Hamlet in *Wisbech* Pariſh; and by ſetting a Sluice croſs the old River at *Stanground*, turned the Waters of *Nene* down this new Cut.

But the River from *Guyhirn* to *Wisbech* being very narrow and ſhallow, it was not capable of receiving and paſſing through it to Sea all the Waters that came pouring down this new Canal in time of Floods united to the Waters of of *Welland*, which River anciently had its Outfall to Sea by *Spalding:* But the Earl of *Exeter*, who undertook to drain *Deeping* Fen (after one Captain *Lovell* had failed in that Attempt) finding that by the Courſe of *Welland* the ſaid Fen could not be drained, he conveyed the Waters of *Weſtlode* and *Deeping* Fen by Sluices and Paſſages under the Bottom of *Welland* and the Banks thereof, by new Drains into *South Holland*; and thence through the Inland Country to the Sea-Bank, and under them to Sea.

By this means the River of *Welland*, which before was but feeble and weak, became below *Spalding* almoſt no River at all; inſomuch as in a great View of the Commiſſioners of Sewers, made in *Aug.* 1618. it was found from *Croyland* to *Spalding* to be very defective, and from *Spalding* to Sea almoſt ſilted up.

The Outfall of *Welland* being thus decayed, great Part of its Waters fell through *Great Porſand*, and ſo by *Quaplode* to Sea; but that Outfall alſo decaying, that way was ſtopped up, and the River driven to ſeek a Courſe in a very faint manner by *South-Eea* towards *Wisbech:* Where again thro' the Defect of *Wisbech* Outfall, when theſe Waters met with thoſe of *Nene* at *Mortons-leame End*, i. e. *Guyhirn*, they both turned back under *Waterſey-Bank* to *Hobbs*, and ſo to *March-Stream*; and there meeting with the old Branch of *Nene* came together to *Well*, and iſſued as much of their Waters as they could through *Well-Creek* into *Ouſe* at *Salters-lode:* the Remainder were enforced to take their Courſe to *Littleport*, (ſee *Hayward's* Map) overflowing all the Low Grounds in their way, in much the ſame manner as before the *New Leam* was made *.

And there being Gravels laid in this New River to keep up the Water for Navigation in Summer time, which hindred the paſſing away of the Floods in the Winter Seaſon, 14 or 15000 Acres of Land in the *North* Level were thereby drowned and made wholly unprofitable; until the 38th of *Eliz.* the Inhabitants of *Thorney* agreed on a Drain for paſſing away the Waters at *Clows-croſs*. From this *Clowes-croſs* there paſſed a Water-courſe thro' the Inland to a Gote or Clow in the Sea-Bank, called *Shire-gote*; and this Water-courſe being ten or twelve Feet lower than the Level above, was conceived to be the beſt Drain to regain the ſurrounded Grounds on the *North* Side of *Wisbech*; and therefore the ſaid Sewer was made from 12 or 14 to 40 Feet in Width, quite away to Sea-ward, where it had a very good Fall.

But becauſe if they had let the Waters of the *New Leam* run always this way to Sea, *Wisbech* Outfall muſt have been therby loſt, and with it the Navigation of that Port; therfore this *Shire* Drain hath been made uſe of only, or at leaſt principally to drain the *North* Level: Which it continued to do effectually till within theſe five or ſix Years laſt paſt. Of late the Outfall of *Wisbech* ſo decaying, and the Sands ſo prevailing, that the Sluice-Doors of their Drain to Seaward are ſilted up, and that famous Drain which convey'd to Sea the Waters of the *North* Level, and kept it dry 160 Years, is now render'd uſeleſs. The Loſs of this Outfall is cauſed by *Wisbech* River growing up, which is occaſion'd partly for want of Freſhes, there having been no conſiderable Flood for ſeveral ſucceſſive Winters till the laſt Year.

Partly by taking almoſt all the Waters out of *Mortons-leam* into the Fens, *&c.* through Sluices in Summer-time, ſo that hardly any goes down to the Outfall.

Partly by the Banks of that *Leam* being placed at too great Diſtance from each other, whereby a ſmall Flood in Winter is loſt, and hath but little Effect in driving out to Sea the Silt left by the Tides in Summer-time.

But

* *Cambden* ſays, (*p.* 412.) this Leam is but of ſmall Uſe, and the Neighbours complain of it.

But principally by taking in conſiderable Quantities of Salt Marſhes near *Wiſbech*, and thereby depriving the Chanel to Seaward of its ancient Stock of Back-Water, confining the Tidal Flood in too narrow Compaſs, and diminiſhing the Quantity of Water that heretofore in its Ebb ſcoured the Silt, and kept the Chanel open.

For theſe Cauſes the River below *Wisbech* is ſo choaked up with Sand from Sea, that *Gunthorp* Sluice-Doors are forcibly kept ſhut by them; ſo that the *North* Level now ſhare the ſame Fate as the reſt of the Fens, and is drowned the whole Year round.

Indeed ſeveral Attempts were made by the Inhabitants of theſe Parts to open *Gunthorp* Sluice-Doors, to let the Land-Waters thro' to Sea, but in vain.

And the Officers of the Corporation of Adventurers obſerving that the Outfall of *Shire* Drain was quite choaked up, and that the *North* Level was by means thereof totally drowned; they endeavoured to recover this Drain and Outfall, and to relieve the Country diſtreſſed. The Scheme they propos'd was to make a Cut in *Wisbech* River from about half a Mile beyond *Gunthorp* Sluice toward *Wisbech*, to *Gunthorp* Sluice, cloſe under Shoar, one hundred Foot wide; into which Canal they intended to turn the River (which is here about half a Mile wide) by means of a Dam to be made croſs the Chanel at the upper End of this Cut: Thinking by guiding the Waters through this Canal to grind out the Silt and Sand, and gain a Depth in it ſufficient to recover and open *Gunthorp* Sluice, and make a Chanel for *Shire* Drain-Waters to paſs to Sea. And the Adventurers ſo far executed this Deſign, that the ſaid Cut was finiſhed, and the intended Dam was made, extending from the *North* Bank of *Wisbech* River directly croſs as far as the Chanel; and they were bringing it quite croſs, but that the Commiſſioners of Sewers of *Wisbech* obſerving that the Bottom of the ſaid Cut was not made near ſo deep as was Low-water Mark in the Chanel of the River, and that it was but 100 Feet wide, whereas the old Courſe is half a Mile wide: they were apprehenſive, if they ſuffer'd the old Chanel to be damm'd acroſs, and they had after that only this narrow Cut, of a high Situation, to receive the Tides from Sea, and to paſs away their back Water and Freſhes, that their Navigation would be thereby deſtroy'd, *&c.* And they were the more afraid that this would be the Conſequence, becauſe the Officers of the Adventurers had before propos'd (both in Print and in Writing) " wholly to deſert *Wisbech* Cha-
" nel near *Gunthorp* Sluice, and carry the Waters thereof in a large Canal to be
" made thro' Marſhland from *Walpole* to *Lyn*, and there to join the Waters of
" the River *Ouſe*, &c. for, ſay they, thereby a Fall of 15 Feet and 3 Inches
" will be gained from *Wisbech* River to the River *Ouſe*, which will effectually
" prevent the ſtraining of the Banks of *Mortons-leame* and *Wisbech* River in
" time of Floods, and ſecure a conſtant Run at *Shire* Drain for the Relief of the
" *North* Level". But it being demonſtrable, that this Method would not anſwer the Ends they propoſed, and that it would ruin the Navigation of *Wisbech*; the Inhabitants of that Town were very apprehenſive, that this new Work (*viz.* the Cut and Dam) was intended to ruin their Chanel, and that then the *Nene* muſt be ſent through Marſhland to *Lyn*, there to join the *Ouſe*. Thus tenacious of their Navigation, they oppoſed the Adventurers, and prevented their proceeding to finiſh their intended Work.

And the making a Dam croſs a Navigable River being contrary to Law, the Commiſſioners of Sewers commenced a *Chancery* Suit againſt the Adventurers, and obliged them to remove ſo much of the Dam as they had made, *viz.* a Bank of about 700 Yards in Length.

Thus that Corporation not being permitted to finiſh this Project, which too inſtead of being of Service to the *North* Level, would in a ſhort time have render'd it irrelievable at all by *Wisbech* Outfall; the *Bedford* Family and the Earl of *Lincoln* took this Affair under their Conſideration, and order'd a Survey to be made. After I had taken the Level from *Gunthorp* Sluice to Seaward, and found that there was ſufficient Deſcent from the Soil of the *North* Level to Low-water Mark in *Wisbech* Chanel, where *Weſt-mere* Creek opens into the Sea to drain the ſaid Level; it was propos'd to make a Canal within Land from the *North-Eaſt* Corner of *Tid* Common, to continue *Shire* Drain through *Cuxton*'s Marſhes, and by the *Waſh-way Houſe* to *Weſt-mere* Creek, being near three Miles, and there to ſet down a Sluice againſt the Sea; where there having always been

a Flood or Ebb Channel, 'tis thought this Sluice will not ſoon be ſilted up; eſpecially if *Sutton-marſh* be not inned, which the Town of *Wisbech* and the Corporations of Adventurers muſt, if poſſible, prevent; for as the imbanking and taking in Salt Marſhes near *Wisbech*, hath contributed to the Deſtruction of the Channel upward; ſo the Inning of *Sutton-marſh* will go a great way toward the growing up of the Channel downward, by which means the Ship-road will be loſt to *Wisbech*; and the new Sluice that is propoſed to be ſet down, may poſſibly be ſilted up, and loſt to Draining.

There were indeed other Propoſals offer'd for Draining the new Level; but the honourable Colonel *Armſtrong*, his Majeſty's now Engineer-General, being conſulted, he, after having, at the Requeſt of the Earl of *Lincoln*, &c. been upon the Spot, gave his Opinion, that this is the only Method that can with Certainty drain the *North* Level through *Wisbech* Outfall.

The Difficulty here will be, to make the Drain and Sluice ſtand the whole Length of Way, being a Quickſand; but for this Cauſe, the Canal is propoſed to be cut very battering, *viz.* ſeventy Feet wide at top, ten Feet deep, and but twenty Feet wide at bottom; and the Earth dug out, is intended to be carried to a ſufficient Diſtance, that its Weight may not not make the Sides cave in. In ſetting down the Sluice, there muſt be the utmoſt Precaution and Care taken; for it is well known, that the Sluice ſet down by King *Charles* I. at the Outfall of *Shire*-drain, ſtood not above ſeven Days, but was ſwallowed up and loſt.

But if the Sluice ſtands, as this Canal will certainly drain the North Level, the Duke of *Bedford* and the Earl of *Lincoln* are reſolved to have it forthwith executed; by which means, that Level will be reſtored to its preſtine Fruitfulfulneſs.

And it is hoped in general, tho' the great Level of the Fenns are now drowned the whole Year round, that the Middle and South Level, as well as the North, will be again recover'd.

And as the *Pomentin* Fenns in *Latium*, which had been drained by *Cornelius Cethegus*, the Conſul, and made a rich and populous Country, but afterwards, by neglect of maintaining the Works, the Waters again by degrees gained upon the Land; ſo that in *Veſpatian*'s Time, theſe Fenns were become ſo re-ſtagnated, that it was then eſteemed a Miracle they ſhould ever have been ſo well drain'd and inhabited as they had been: —— Yet was again drained, and the Land recover'd by the Emperor *Trajan*.

So the Inhabitants of theſe Fenns and the adjacent Parts, relying on the known Juſtice and Honour of the Earl of *Lincoln*; and being convinced of his good Affection for this Country, and that he, as Surveyor-General of the great Level of the Fens, perfectly underſtanding the Cauſes of theſe Fenns now (Meadows once) being ſurrounded, will take proper Meaſures, and in Conjunction with other Powers, execute proper Methods to recover them from the Waters, and make this a fruitful, populous and rich Country.——But to return from this Digreſſion.

From what hath been ſaid of *Mortons Leam*, it appears, that while that Leam diſtreſſed the North Level, *&c.* it gave little or no Relief to the Iſle of *Ely*, but thoſe Lands continu'd overflow'd as before, as appears by the Preſentments made of the Rivers and Drains neglected; of Rivers want of Scouring, of Gravels, Stamps, Weres, and other Stops of Water; and not ſheering and roding of the Streams, and keeping the Waters clear from Weeds, *&c.* in the Years 1528, 33, 35, 36, 70, 76, *&c.*

1576. And for the Neglect of their Sewers, *&c.* there was an Eſtreat of the Seſſions of Sewers holden at *Ely*, *April* 16. 16. *Eliz.* by which the Inhabitants of ſeveral Towns were diſtrained, *viz.* the Towns of *Downham*, *Littleport*, *Stretham*, *Sutton*, *Coveney*, *Doddington*, *Mepale*, *Chateris*, *Wittleſey*, *Willingham*, *Wickford*, *Wentworth*, *Witcham*, &c. for not Diking out their Lodes, for neglecting Banks and Sewers, and for ſetting down Stamps, *&c.*

But theſe Lodes and Sewers leading to *Wisbech* River, whoſe Outfall grew into more and more Decay; and the *Ouſe* now having the new Courſe to *Lenne*, the keeping them in Repair could be of but little uſe toward Draining the Country, which wanted new Sewers to convey the Waters of the Level into the new Courſe of the *Ouſe*, to be paſſed away to Sea through the new Outfall by *Lenne*.

And therefore Sir *John Popham*, Lord Chief Juſtice of *England* to K. *James* I. much affecting the Good of this Country, procured an Act of Parliament for making new Drains, *&c.* which was intitled,

An Act for the Draining of certain Fenns and Low-grounds within the Iſle of Ely, and Counties adjoining, ſubject to Hurt by Surrounding: And ran thus. *July* 13. 1605. *Lord Popham's Undertaking.*

" Whereas it is affirmed by skilful and expert Men, *&c.* That the Fenns and " Low-grounds, lying and being within the Iſle of *Ely*, &c. may be drained, if " ſufficient Authority be given: And whereas Sir *John Popham*, and others, " have undertaken to do their beſt Endeavours, *&c.* Be it therefore enacted, *&c.* " That the ſaid Sir *John Popham*, &c. ſhall have Power, *&c.* to make Works for " that purpoſe, *&c.*

" And to cauſe to be made a ſufficient Conveyance for *Ouſe*, either by enlarging " the Channel, or by imbanking in ſuch Places, or by doing any thing elſe, " by them thought needful, from *Erith-bridge* to *Salters-lode*; ſo as they debar " not the Towns and Commons of convenient Paſſage and Acceſs to the River " over the Banks, in convenient Places, for neceſſary Occaſions.

" And to make two new Rivers, to begin about *Erith-bridge*, where ſix Commiſſioners, whereof four inhabiting within the Iſle ſhall think fit, to fall into " *Ouſe* about *Denver-hith*; with *ſufficient Banks* and Indikes, as well *of Old Ouſe*, as of the new Rivers, to be laid ſo far off one from the other, as ſix " Commiſſioners, whereof four of the Iſle of *Ely*, &c. or of the Counties of " *Cambridge* or *Norfolk* reſpectively, where the Work ſhall be done, ſhall think fit: " with *ſufficient Sluices at the upper end of the new Rivers and Weſt-water, in ſuch " ſort as the Navigation in* Old Ouſe *and* Grant *be not impair'd.*

" *And to imbank in all Places needful*, Grant, Mildenhall, Brandon, *and* " Stoke *Rivers*, viz.

" *Grant*, from or near a Corner below *Clayhith-ferry.*

" *Mildenhall*, } Rivers from their Entrance into the Fenns, or from ſome more
" *Brandon*, } convenient Place.

" *Stoke* River, from *Stoke-cauſey*, unto the Places where they fall into *Ouſe.*

" And to do any thing elſe needful for the Preſervation of the ſaid Banks; and " to amend, and to enlarge the ſaid Rivers where need is: And the Banks " and Indykes to be laid ſo far aſunder as ſix Commiſſioners of Sewers ſhall think " fit, (four of the Iſle of *Ely*, or reſpectively where the Work is done) with " convenient Acceſs to the Rivers, as aforeſaid.

" And to make ſufficient *Land-Eeas* and Banks in all Places needful, ſo near " the Skirts of the Upland, as ſix Commiſſioners ſhall think fit, to convey the " Waters to the Rivers.

" And if any Perſon ſhall maliciouſly cut, break up or caſt down any Bank " made, or hereafter to be made, for this Draining; and ſhall not within fourteen Days after Publication made in the Pariſh-Church where the Offence " ſhall be done, ſurrender himſelf to a Juſtice of the Peace, and in fourteen " Days after pay the Fine the ſaid Juſtice ſhall think ſufficient for the amending " the Damage, and double Damages to the Party indamaged, that then the " Offenders ſhall be adjudged Felons.

" And that the Undertakers, their Heirs and Aſſigns, for draining, and preſerving, and perpetual Maintenance of the ſame Draining, ſhall have for ever " in Severalty 112000 Acres Statute Meaſure, to be taken and proportion'd out " of every particular Manor, or out of any other Fenn or Low Grounds within " the Limits, *&c.* by Commiſſioners thereto aſſigned, according to their Diſcretion, and to diſtinguiſh what Number of Acres ſhall be ſo taken out.

" And that the Undertakers ſhall have all the Soil, Waters and Fiſhings of all " the new Rivers.

" And the Undertakers to take no Profits of the Grounds, but as they ſhall " finiſh the Draining of every Manor, ſo to enter into the Grounds proportion'd " within the ſame Manor.

" But if any of the Fenns, *&c.* fall out to be again overflown, then there " ſhall be reaſonable Recompence made (to the Parties damnify'd) by the Governor out of the 112000 Acres aſſigned for the perpetual Maintenance and

" Preſervation of the ſaid Draining; to be aſſeſſed by any ſix Juſtices of the " Peace (whereof two to be of the *Quorum*) where ſuch ſurrounding ſhall " happen, payable when they ſhall appoint; and an Action of Debt to lye " againſt the Governors for the ſame, with Damage for Non-payment, *&c.* And " if all the Profit of the 112000 Acres will not make Satisfaction, then the " whole muſt; and the Parties damnified, according to their ſeveral Eſtates, " ſhall enter into all again, until the Fenns ſhall be recovered again by new " Draining or Repairs at the Undertakers Coſt, *&c.*

" The Undertakers to finiſh the Works within three Years next after this Par- " liament.

" And after the ſaid Draining, there ſhall be a *Corporation*, Body Politick, " or a Company of thirty known, diſcreet, and ſufficient Perſons, by the Name " of the Governors of the Fens within the Iſle of *Ely*, and the Counties ad- " joining: And they ſhall be enabled to purchaſe and part with Lands, *&c.* and " to ſue and to be ſued by that Name. And the firſt to be † theſe——* *Martin* " Biſhop of *Ely*——Sir *Anthony Mildmay*——* Sir *John Peyton* Governor of " *Guernſey*——Sir *Oliver Cromwell*——* Sir *Robert Bevel*——Sir *Edward Coke* " Attorney——* Sir *John Cutts*——* Sir *John Heigham*——* Sir *Robert Wing-* " *field*——* Sir *Robert Cotton*——* Sir *Edward Apeſly*——* Sir *Henry Warner* " * Sir *Miles Sandes*——* Sir *Simeon Steward*——* Sir *Thomas Lambart*—— " ——Sir *William Rumney*, Knights——*Humphry Tyndal*, Dean of *Ely*——* *An-* " *thony Irby*——*Thomas War*——*Thomas Rawlyne*——*Henry Totnal*, Eſqires. " ——*John Eldred*——*Roger Offeild* of *London*, Merchant——* *John Fincham* " and *John Hunt*, Gent.

" And as theſe do die, new to be choſen by the moſt Voices out of ſuch " Lords or Undertakers, as ſhall have 1000 Acres at the leaſt of Lands aſſigned " to the Undertakers as aforeſaid.

Theſe and other Particulars of leſs Note being agreed on, Sir *John Popham*, fell in hand with the Work. And in Purſuit of this noble Undertaking (it having been proved by a View of the Commiſſioners of Sewers, That at *Salters-lode there was a Fall of ten Foot from the Soil of the Fenns to the Low-water Mark in the River* Ouſe, beſide the natural Deſcent of the Fenn-grounds from the Uplands of *Huntington* thither: and *Well-creek* being very narrow, and uncapable of paſſing away the Waters thro' it into the *Ouſe*, or of being made wider at and about *Well*, on account of Villages ſituate on its Banks, *&c.* Therefore) the Lord *Popham*, &c. ordain'd a new River to be made eighty Feet wide, and eight Feet deep, from *March* River to the *Ham*, croſs *Marmond*, &c. through *Neete-more*, to fall into *Well-creek*, near *London-lode* (ſee *Hayward*'s Map); and from thence to *Salters-lode*, *Well-creek* was to be dyked ſixty Feet wide, and the Bottom ſunk four Feet deep under Low-water Mark, *viz.* as deep as *Ouſe*; that thereby the Fenns might be drain'd, and the extream Floods receiv'd.

1605. Hopham-lode. The 7th of *Auguſt*, 1605, this new River was begun, Mr. *Richard Atkins* then by; and the Work was proſecuted ſo well, that upon the 21ſt of *December* following the Waters were let through it to eaſe the Iſle, and help *Well* River.

But Mr. *Atkins* ſaith, (my Lord *Popham* dying) it was ſtopp'd up, in regard of the Inſufficiency of the Banks. Till four Years after, *June* 7. 1609, it was again purſued to be perfected, and was caſt two Foot deeper, for the Benefit of moſt part of the Iſle of *Ely*, eſpecially for the Hundred of *Wisbech*, and the Towns of *Upwell*, *March*, *Doddington*, *Wimlington*, *Benwick*, *Chatteris*, *Wittleſey*, &c. and other Parts thereto adjoining, even to the Highlands: For all which it would have been a perfect Drain, as it was preſented at a View of Commiſſioners of Sewers, *July* 26, 1608.

But this River being hotly purſued at the firſt making, went on without any Satisfaction made for the ſeveral Grounds which were cut through to make it, or the Commons, by which it paſſed. Hereupon *Sinolphus Bell*, Eſq; having much Ground adjoining yearly drowned by this new River (called *Popham-lode*) obtain'd

† *N. B.* Thoſe mark'd thus * were Comiſſioners of Sewers.

tain'd by a View of the Commiſſioners, a Law to keep the upper Doors thereof ſhut, until the Country would ſatisfy the Parties injur'd; and alſo ſo fortify the Banks, that his Grounds ſhould not thereby be hurt.

And the Doors at the upper end were accordingly kept ſhut, ſo that no Waters could paſs through this new River. Which River (ſaith Mr. *Atkins*) was a worthy one, and well placed, having from *Well-town* End to *Salters-lode*, which is a little above four Miles, more Fall than there is thought to be between *Peterborow* and *Well*, which is forty Miles and more, as the Water cometh.

This famous new River being ſtopp'd, the Country lay in its former Condition; and my Lord *Popham* dying, his whole Project was rejected: and ſo nothing was done. And the Level, by reaſon of the Diviſion there was between the Commiſſioners of Sewers, *&c.* who had no Power to make new Works; and becauſe the Country wanted proper Drains, *&c.* continued to be greatly annoyed with Water, which gave occaſion to the Undertaking for a general Draining of the Fenns.

SECT. IV.

Of the Undertaking for a General Draining of the great Level of the Fens; and of the Limitations and Reſtraints ſtipulated in the Adventurers original Propoſals, Contracts, and Proceeding, for the preſerving the Navigation of the Port of King's-Lyn, *and of* Cambridge, *in all the Rivers that have their Courſe through the ſame,* &c. *with the Arguments for and againſt the Scheme that was follow'd to drain the Fenns.*

THAT *Wisbech* River, originally the great Outfall of the Level, was loſt by Neglect of putting the Laws of Sewers in Execution, and by not taking care to keep the Rivers and principal Drains clean, *&c.* is indiſputable—— And it hath been already proved, that the Decay of that Outfall was the Occaſion of the Country's being ſurrounded at firſt. And after the Waters of *Great Ouſe* were let fall into *Ouſe Parva*, in conſequence thereof the Outfall of *Lenne* became the fitteſt to carry off the Fen Waters.——The Reaſon why the Lands in the Iſle of *Ely*, &c. continued drowned was, there were no proper Drains to convey the Waters of the Level into the River of *Great Ouſe*, which now has its Courſe by *Lenne* to the *North* Sea, the Drains having all of them been of ancient Time made to ſew into the *Ouſe*, while it had its Courſe and Outfall by *Wiſbech*; which ſaid ancient Drains were now of no Uſe for Conveyance of the Fen Waters to Sea.

And though my Lord *Popham* did by Act of Parliament make new Works, yet it was queſtioned whether the Commiſſioners of Sewers could by their Power make new Works where none had been before; and great Controverſies aroſe (12. *Jacobi*) in the Counties of *Cambridge*, *Huntington* and *Northampton*, about the Extent of their Commiſſion; many obſtinate and ill-diſpos'd Perſons pretending, that the Commiſſioners of Sewers had not Authority to cauſe new Banks, Drains, or Sluices, to be made where there had not been any before, *&c.* and that they had not Power to lay a Tax or Rate for doing ſuch new Works.——This Oppoſition tending to the manifeſt Peril of the Deſtruction and Inundation of many large Levels, the Commiſſioners of Sewers repreſented the ſame to the Lords of the Privy-Council; and their Lordſhips (*Nov.* 8. 1616.) finding in their Wiſdoms that it could neither ſtand with Law, nor common Senſe and Reaſon, that in Caſe of ſo great Conſequence the Law could be ſo void of Providence, as to reſtrain the Commiſſioners of Sewers from making new Works to ſtop the Fury of the Waters, as well as to repair the old, where Neceſſity did require it for the Safety of the Country: The Board order'd the Attorney-General to conſult the King's Learned Council: And they having weigh'd and compar'd theſe undue Proceedings with the ancient Laws of this Realm, and the Practice of ancient and late Times; and with the Opinion of the late Lord Chief-Juſtice *Popham*, touching the Power and Authority of the Commiſſion of Sewers.

Nov. 8. 1616.

Sir *Henry Hobart*, Attorney-General, made the following Report:

" *That the Grounds now ſought to be won by theſe new Sewers and Drains, are*
" *ſuch as naturally and anciently were dry Grounds, and not continually overflown;*
" *ſo as they were truly Land and not Water, and are ſtill to this Day dry half the*
" *Year, and ſometimes in dry Years longer.*

" That there have been always common Drains maintain'd at publick Charge
" for the conveying away of the Waters in time of Downfals or other Over-
" flows.

" That the ſaid ancient Drains cannot now poſſibly (were they never ſo well
" maintain'd) drain the Country, becauſe their Conveyance while they were
" in Uſe, was into the Sea, running out at *Wisbech*, from whence the Sea is now
" departed: *So that there is no Way now to carry theſe Waters to the Sea but*
" *by Lenne-haven*, to which therefore theſe Works are made to carry them.

" The Caſe, I ſay, ſtanding thus in all theſe Parts, I am of Opinion, that the
" Law of Sewers lately made for this new Work is warranted by the Commiſ-
" ſioners of Sewers: And that a Tax may be ſet as well for the making and
" maintain-

PART OF HUNTINGTONSHIRE

PART OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

PART OF SUFFOLK

LEVEL

MIDDLE LEVEL

SOUTH ELY LEVEL

Stibinton
Nerington
Newton
Belling Brook
Pastone
PETERBORO'
Stillton
Yarlo
Standground
Sawtry
Cunington
Holme
Wittlesey Meer
Wittlesey Common Fenn
Wittlesey Fields
Ugg Meere
Ramsey Middle Meer
Flag Fenn
Ramsey Meere
Wittlesey Fenn
Glass Moore
Upwood
Ouse flu:
HUNTINGTON
Wood Walton
Berry
Warbois
Ramsey Hollowes
Pedley
Pattocks Drain
St. Ives
Somersham
Somersham Fenn
Somersham Common
Chatteriss
Hollowell
Blumsham
Erith
Swasey
Over
Over Bank
Hermitage Sluice
Willingham Fenn
Willingham
Middle Fenn
Haddenham Fenn
Mepal
Sutton
Wicken
Ramsey
Bampton
Haddenham
Wilburton
Cottenham
Cottenham Fenn
Chesterton
Milton
Denny Abby
Waterbeach
Stretham Meere
Ditton
Fen to Mow
Upware
Wicken Fenn
Fulbert
Bottesham
Swaftham Bulbeck
Swaftham Priory
Burwell
Wicken
Soham
Soham Meere
Upland of Soam
Lanward
Fordham
Isleham
Fordham Fenn
Milden.h Fenn
Milden.h Common
Milden.h
Worlington
Mildenhall
Burton Mill
Lackenheath
Lackenheath New Fenn
Brandon Common Fenn
Wainford
Wainford Fenn
Lakenheath
Old Bedford River and Bank
New Bedford River and Bank
West Moor
Downham
Stretham
Ely
Thetford
Littleport
Chatteris
Dodington
March
Peterboro' Great Fenn
Peterboro' Little Fenn
Eye
Manea
Manea Dams
Whittlesey Common
Gravenor
Benwick
Ramson Moor
Borough Moor
Whelpmoor
Burnt Fenn
Soham Drain
Seam Conesy
Seam Common
Upland of Seam
Severals of Seam
Gr. Netlam
Gr. Mow Fenn
Mow Fenn
Wicken Fenn
Wittlesey Drain
Vermuden's Drain
Nor: moor
Stony Fenn
Long Wood
Mead Land
Sutton Cau:
Middle Drain
Delf
Hilton Fenn
Ouse flu
Lazer
Harrimeer
Seam Drain
Wittlesey Drain
Grunty Fenn Drain
Drove Fen
Bedford River
Whittlesey Mere
Peterboro' Great Fenn
Peterboro' Little Fenn
Eye
Caus
Basil Meer
Mottons
Pidley
Leam
Glass Moore
Ramsey Meere
Wittlesey Fenn
Pidley Leam
Great Fenn
Sewer
Plant
Dodington
Stony Fenn
Manea Dams
Whittlesey Common
Gravenor
Old Bedford River and Bank
New Bedford River and Bank
Wittlesey Fields
Vermuden's Drain
Flag Fenn
Ramsey Middle Meer
Ramsey Fen
Upwood Fenn
Ugg Meere
Wittlesey Meer
Wittlesey Common Fenn
Norfolk Lasett Bridg
Stanghurst
Wittlesey Drain
Ramsey Lee
Berry Fenn
Ramsey Hollowes
Pattocks Drain
Warbois Fenn
Pedley Hard
Somersham Fenn
Somersham Common
West Water
Chatteris Fenns
Nolwood
Tilbert Lode
Long Fenn
Mead Land
Sutton Cau:
Hermitage Sluice
Willingham Fenn
Middle Fenn
Haddenha. Fenn
Mepal
Sutton
Wicken
Audley Bridg
Audley
Bampton
Haddenham
Wilburton
Cottenham
Cottenham Fenn
Lazer
Ouse flu
Stretham
Thetford
Littleport
Chesterton
Milton
Denny Abby
Waterbeach
Stretham Meere
Ditton
Fen to Mow
Upware
Wicken Fenn
Soham Drain
Seam Conesy
Seam Common
Upland of Seam
Severals of Seam
Gr. Netlam
Gr. Mow Fenn
Mow Fenn
Burnt Fenn
Fulbert
Bottesham
Swaftham Bulbeck
Swaftham Priory
Burwell
Wicken
Soham
Soham Meere
Lanward
Fordham
Isleham
Fordham Fenn
Milden.h Fenn
Milden.h Common
Milden.h
Worlington
Mildenhall
Burton Mill
Lackenheath
Lackenheath New Fenn
Brandon Common Fenn
Wainford
Wainford Fenn
Lakenheath
Old Bedford River and Bank
New Bedford River and Bank
West Moor
Downham
Ely

A MAPP
of the great LEVEL of ye FENNS
called
BEDFORD LEVEL,
also, Shewing the Works *of ye* Adventurers, *and the several* Drains *made to convey the* Waters *of the said* Level *into the* Rivers *that have their Course thro' the* Fenns, *and the proper* Outfall *of those* Rivers *to* Sea.

By Tho. Badeslade

1725.

PART OF LINCOLNSHIRE

HOLLAND

MARSHLAND

PART OF NORFOLK

Spalding
Crowland
Welland flu:
Great Sortsand
Deeping Bank
Peterborough
Eye
Cattes Water
NORTH LEVEL
Thorney Fenn
Thorney Abbey
Drove Chappel
Gedney Chappel
South Eea Bank
New South Eea
Part of Wisbech Fenn
St. Leonard
Shire Drain
Part of Wisbeach High Fenn
new Open'd
Cross Keys Morrow
Old South Eea
Wilbeach Drain
Tidd St. Giles
Tidd St. Maries
Newton
Guthlaxton Sluce
St. Marys
Leverington
Wisbeach North Side
Walderser Fenns
South Wisbeach Side
Coldham Bank
Walton
Walsoken
Emneth
Walpole
Cross Keys
Gatt Sand
West Way House
Sutton Marsh
Thief
Terrington Hole
Breast
Pinque Way
North Sand
Marshland Fenn
Smeeth
St. Johns
Terrington
St. Lawrence
Tilney
Lelington Knights Feoffe
St. Marys
Clench Warton
Magdalen Fenn
Magdalen
Salters Lode
Stow Bridge
St. Peters
West Fenn
Eabrink
Germans
Downham Eea
Downham Market
Stow
LYNN REGIS
Seechin
Ganwood
Castle Rising
Woolverton
Darfingham
Appleton
Houghton
Raynham
Rarham
Deerham Abby
Wiverton
Stoke
Methwold Severals
Methwold Comon
Methwold Hive
Feltwell
Methwold
Norwold
Hockwold
Wilton
Weeting
Brandon
Stoke River
Brandon River
Wallderser Bank
Coldham Drain
Bishops Dike
Shrewsbury Lode
Upwell Outwell
Eastmoor
Neal Moor
Old Powdike
New Powdike
Tows Drain
Salters Lode
Downham Eea
Wisbeach Drain
Pruikis Drain
Old South Eea
Shire Drain
Stow Bridge
Stoke Drain
Methwold Drain
Hockwold Drain
Brandon Drain
Scale of Miles
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
S. Parker Sculpt.

PART OF HUNTINGTONSHIRE

PART OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

PART OF SUFFOLK

HUNTINGTON

CAMBRIDGE

Stibinton
Newton
Belling Brook
Peterboro:
Paston
Werrington
Stilton
Yarley
Standground
Sawtry
Cunington
Holme
Wittlesey Meer
Wittlesey Common Fenn
Wood Walton
Ugg Meere
Ramsey Middle Mere
Flag Fenn
Ouse flu:
Upwood
Ramsey Meere
Wittlesey Fenn
Berry
Ramsey
Warbois
Ramsey Hollowes
Pedley
Pattocks Drain
Barbois Fenn
St. Ives
Somersham
Somersham Fenn
Hollywell
Chatteris
Bluntsham
Erith
Swasey
Over
Over Bank
Hermitage Sluice
Willingham Fenn
Willingham
Middle Fenn
Haddenham Fenn
Mepal
Sutton
Wicken
Haddenham
Wimblington
Hilgay Drain
Hampton
Cottenham
Herd Fenn
Cottenham Fenn
Milton
Waterbeach
Waterbeach Meere
Ditton
Fen to Mow
Joist Fenn
Fulbern
Swasham Cara
Swasham High Fenn
Bottesham
Swasham Priory
Burwell
Wicken
Soham
Soham Meere
Upland of Soham
Lanward
Fordham
Isleham
Mildenhall
Berton Mill
Warrington
Lakenheath
Lackenheath Fenn
Wangford
Wangford Fenn
Old Bedford River and Bank
New Bedford River and Bank
Hilgay Drain
Grunty Fenn Drain
Downham
Stretham
Ely
Thetford
Littleport
Chatteris Fenn
Dodington
Peterboro Great Fenn
Peterboro Little Fenn
Stanground
Yaxley
Eye
Whittlesey Mere
Flag Fenn
Glass Meere
Ramsey Meere
Wittlesey Fenn
Ramsey Mereside
Ramsey Heights
Ramsey Moor
Borough Fen
Common Field
Stony Fenn
Manea
Manea Dams
Wisbech Common & Graveniger
Wimblington
Doddington
March
Chatteris
Mildenhall Fen
Milden.h Common
Mildenhall River
Lackenheath Fenn
Lackenheath
Brandon Common
Brandon
Lakenheath Warren
Lakenheath Fen
Lakenheath Hall
Lakenheath Poor Fen
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A MAPP
of the great LEVEL of ye FENNS
called
BEDFORD LEVEL,
also, Shewing the Works of ye Adventurers, and the several Drains made to convey the Waters of the said Level into the Rivers that have their Course thro' the Fenns, and the proper Outfall of those Rivers to Sea.

By Tho. Badeslade.

1725.

PART OF LINCOLNSHIRE

HOLLAND

LEVEL

NORTH

MARSH

LAND

Fenn

PART OF NORFOLK

Spalding
Crowland
Great Sortsand
Deeping Bank
Welland Riv.
Peterboro'
Eye
Cattswater
Thorney
Thorney Fenn
Knar Fenn
Bevill's Leam
Morton's Leam
Drove Chappel
Gedney Chappel
South Eea Bank
Part of Wisbech Fenn
St. Leonard
Shire Drain
New Open's
Close Cross
Morrow
Wilbeach Drain
Tidd St. Giles
Tidd St. Maries
Newton
Leverington
Guthlaxton Sluice
St. Mary's
Waldersey Fenns
Wisbeach North Side
Wisbeach South Side
Coldham Bank
Balton
Walpole
Emneth
Walsoken
Cross Keys
Elm
Upwell
Outwell
Bishops Dike
New Powdike
Marshland Smeth
Sheatt Lode
St. Johns
Terrington
St. Laurence
Tilney
Lelington
St. Mary's
Clench Barton
Labrink
Germans
St. Peters
Magdalen
Magdalen Fenn
Stow Bridge
Salters Lode
Tong's Drain
Downham Lea
Downham Market
Stow
Lynn Regis
Seechin
Gaywood
Ravham
Deerham Abby
Wiverton
Stoke
Stoke River
Methwold Severals
Methwold Common
Methwold Hive
Feltwell
Methwold
Northwold
Hockwold
Wilton
Weeting
Brandon
Brandon River
Gatt Sand
West Bay House
Subton House
Thief
Terrington Hole
Breast
Pinque Way
North Sand
Castle Rising
Woolverton
Darsingham
Appleton
Houghton
Raynham

A Scale of Miles
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

S. Parker Sculp.

" maintaining of it, according to the Meaning of the Statutes and Commiſſion,
" as it might have been for the old, if they had remained ſtill in Uſe.
" And therefore I am of mind plainly, that though it may ſeem ſtill in the
" Power of the Commiſſion by the Letter of it to maintain the old Sewers; yet
" the Commiſſioners cannot now enforce the Maintenance of them, when they
" are no longer indeed Sewers, nor any Benefit or Damage can ariſe from them:
" For Sewers are made and maintained for the Land, and not the Land for the
" Sewers. On the contrary, when they fail, Reaſon teacheth, and Neceſſity
" enforceth, that ſome other Remedy be found in Supply of it. And the
" Words of the Commiſſion bears it plainly, that gives Power in one Clauſe
" to make neceſſary and behooful Laws for the Safeguard and Preſervation of
" the Lands lying to the Premiſes; which Premiſes being reſtrain'd as much as
" may be to the Sewers, yet the Land lying to them muſt be underſtood the
" Lands about them, or for which they were wont to ſerve: So that the Safe-
" guard and Preſervation of the Lands is the principal End of the *Commiſſion*;
" which being not to be preſerved by the old Sewers, are by this Clauſe to be
" preſerved at large, that is, as beſt may be: And by the Judgment of the *Com-*
" *miſſioners* ſhall be found neceſſary and behooful, which Words and Meaning
" are ſatisfied in this Caſe.

HENRY HOBART.

But notwithſtanding this his Opinion given of the Power of the *Commiſſioners of Sewers*, yet ſuch was the Oppoſition of ſome Men, and the Inability of other Men for making *new Works*, and ſuch Variety of Opinions, and ſuch Diſtraction there was between the Commiſſioners themſelves at their Meetings, that much Charges were loſt, and nothing could be agreed on to be done. Therefore the Commiſſioners of Sewers for the Counties of *Northampton*, *Cambridge*, *Huntington*, *Lincoln*, *Norfolk*, and the Iſle of *Ely*, exhibited an humble Petition to the Right Honourable the Lords and others of his Majeſty's Privy-Council, 19. *June*, 1618. *June* 19. 1618.

Shewing,
" That whereas their Honours were pleas'd to take into their Conſiderations
" the great Work of Draining; and to effect it the better, did direct that one
" general Commiſſion of Sewers ſhould be granted for all theſe Counties, that
" ſo by a general Care and Conſent it might be foreſeen, that nothing ſhould be
" done under the Pretence of doing good to one Part, which might annoy ano-
" ther: Since which Commſſiion granted, ſundry Seſſions have been holden, at
" which a more than ordinary Number of Commiſſioners have been preſent:
" Whoſe Forwardneſs to meet, approve their Deſires to forward the general
" Work; and yet nevertheleſs hath not hitherto ſorted out that Effect of their
" Labours, as they hoped and deſired, by reaſon of the Variety of Opinions
" amongſt the Commiſſioners, which diſtract their Reſolutions and Judgments.
" The Means to effect this, reſt upon the Conſideration of theſe two Things.

" I. That it be provided, that the three ancient Rivers of *Nene*, *Welland*,
" and *Ouſe*, may be convey'd to the Sea by their ſeveral Paſſages with
" ſuch convenient Outfalls, as ſhall be fitteſt for the ſeveral Good and
" Safety of all Parts.
" II. That Care be taken of the Town of *Lyn*, the Country of Marſhland
and *Wiggenhall*, the Hundred of *Wisbech*, and Part of *Holland*.

" Yet becauſe all agreed not in the Means of effecting thereof, whereby it came
" to paſs, that ſome to ſatisfy their own Opinions, and ſome to prevent their
" Fears and particular Loſs or Charge, have made ſome Oppoſitions; and one
" in the Abſence of another have troubled this Honourable Board with Petitions
" and Informations, which hinder the Work intended; and whilſt theſe things
" are in Diſpute, the Work is deferr'd, Time and Charge loſt, and many Parts
" ſuffer and undergo much Danger.
" We humbly beſeech your Honours, on the Behalf of theſe whole Countries, that
" your Honours, for the preventing the like Inconveniencies hereafter, will be
" pleas'd by Order from this Honourable Board to direct, that at the General
" Seſſions

" Seſſions already appointed to be holden at *Huntington* on the laſt of this " Month, one of the Clerks of the Board may be preſent, and with the Com- " miſſioners may take a View of the Outfalls, if need ſhall require; to the end " that he being indifferent to all Parts and Parties, may truly without Partiality " inform your Lordſhips of thoſe Things, which ſhall then be propounded of " the Feaſibleneſs of the Work, and the fitteſt Means to effect it, without, or with " the leaſt Loſs to any Part. And that upon the Return thereof to this Honou- " rable Board, one conſtant and reſolute Courſe may be directed by Order of " this Board, whereunto they aſſure themſelves every Man will ſubmit his own " private Conceit, and thereby reſt ſatisfied. Signed,

L. *Ruſhall — George Manners — Fra. Fane — Miles Sandys — Robert Bevell — John Cutts — Hen. Carvill — Will. Wendy — Robert Audley — Robert Heath.*

At *Whitehall* on *Friday* Afternoon, the ſaid 19th of *June*, their Lordſhips took this Petition into Conſideration, and " did reſolve and order, at the Motion " and Deſire of the Commiſſioners, according to Precedents of former Times, " that one of the Clerks of the Council (to which Purpoſe Sir *Clement Edmonds*, " Kt. was named) ſhould repair to the Town of *Huntington* the 12th Day of *Au- " guſt* next enſuing, to be preſent at the Aſſembly and Meeting of the Commiſ- " ſioners of Sewers of thoſe Parts; to the end that having, as an indifferent Par- " ty, fully informed himſelf, upon View of all the Outfalls, and Information of " the Country, of the true State of that Affair, he may either, upon Conference " and Debate of the Differences, accommodate the ſame as ſhall be expedient, " or otherwiſe make Report thereof to the Board, that thereupon ſuch final Or- " der may be taken, as ſhall be found moſt requiſite for the general Good and " Safety of thoſe Countries.

" And it is farther ordered, That a ſufficient Number of the Commiſſioners " of every the ſaid Counties do meet at *Huntington* at the time appointed, and " attend the Service from Place to Place, until the Outfalls be all viewed, and " ſuch Order taken, as ſhall be then thought expedient.

Concordat cum Regiſtro,
Ex C. EDMONDES.

12. *Aug.* " At a General Seſſion of Sewers holden at *Huntington* by Appointment of the " Lords of the Privy-Council, whereat Sir *Clement Edmonds*, Kt. one of the " Clerks of the ſaid Honourable Privy-Council. was preſent.

" At this Aſſembly of the Commiſſioners of Sewers it is ordered, That three " Commiſſioners of every County ſhall accompany the ſaid Sir *Clement Edmonds* " to take View of the Outfalls, and to inform themſelves of the State of the " County in reſpect thereof, and of other Debates and Differences amongſt the " Commiſſioners, according to an Order of the Board at *Whitehall*, 19. *June*, " 1618.

The Committees agreed upon at the ſaid Seſſion to perform the ſaid Service.

Northamptonſhire	Sir *Francis Fane.* Mr. *Catesby.* Mr. *Edwards.*	*Lincolnſhire*	Sir *George Manners.* Sir *William Welby.* Serjeant *Bawtre.*
Norfolk	Mr. *Carvil.* Mr. *Fincham.* Mr. *Butler.*	*Combridgeſhire*	Sir *John Cuts.* Sir *Richard Cocks.* Mr. *Colvile.*
Huntingtonſhire	Sir *Oliver Cromwell.* Sir *Robert Bevil.* Mr. *Cromwell*, Sen.	*Iſle of Ely*	Sir *Miles Sandys.* Sir *Simeon Steward.* Mr. *Beneworth.*

And after Sir *Clement Edmonds*, in Company of theſe *Commiſſioners*, had taken a general View of the *Fens* and their *Outfalls*, he made the following Report to the Lords of his Majeſty's moſt Honourable Privy-Council.

At *Hampton-Court* the 29th of *September*, 1618. Preſent

Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*.
Lord Chancellor.
Lord Privy-Seal.
Lord Steward.
Lord Marquis *Buckingham*.
Lord Admiral.
Lord Viſcount *Fenton*.
Lord Biſhop of *Ely*.
Lord *Carew*.
Mr. Treaſurer.
Mr. Comptroller.
Mr. Secretary *Naunton*.
Lord Marquis *Hamilton*.
Lord Chamberlain.
Earl of *Arundel*.
Lord Viſcount *Doncaſter*.
Mr. Chancellor of the *Exchequer*.
Maſter of the *Rolls*.
Sir *Edward Coke*.

Sir Clement Edmonds *his Report.* June 29.

" According to *your Lordſhips Orders* of the 19th of *June* laſt, concerning the " Difference ariſing upon the Execution of the *Commiſſion of Sewers* for the *Coun-* " *ties* of *Northampton*, *Cambridge*, the *Iſle of Ely*, &c. I repaired to the *Town of* " *Huntington* the 12*th Day of Auguſt* laſt, and was preſent at a *General Seſſion of* " *Sewers*, which by your Lordſhips ſaid Order was appointed to be held at that " Place: Where moſt of the principal Knights and Gentlemen, Commiſſioners " for thoſe Parts, were then met together. At which *Seſſion*, for their better " Direction and Proceeding it was ordered, That three Commiſſioners of each " County ſhould be choſen to view the *Outfalls*, and inform themſelves of the " true State of that Affair.

" And to that Purpoſe they ſhould the firſt Day go down the *River Ouſe* to " *Ely*, and take view of ſuch Things by the way as were indifferent, or other- " wiſe needed Reformation; and from thence the next Day down the ſaid *River* " *to the Outfall of Lenne*, with the like View and Obſervation. The third Day " from *Lenne* to *Wisbech* to ſee the Outfall of the *River Nene*; and there to ſtay " two Days, as well for viewing the *Drains* and *Sewers* thereabouts, as the *Out-* " *falls* thereof.——The fifth Day up to *Croyland*, and by the way to view *Clows-* " *croſs*, *South Eea*, and other *Inland Sewers*——The ſixth Day to *Spalding*, to " view the *Outfall* of the *River of Welland*.——And from thence, the ſeventh " Day, to *Peterborow*, to which Place the *Seſſion* was adjourned to receive the " Report of that View: All which was accordingly performed by the Commit- " tees aforenamed. Together likewiſe with my Lord *Ruſſel*, who tho' he came " after the Committees were agreed upon, yet went along in the Company, and " gave great Aſſiſtance in the Buſineſs.

" My Lords, ——The *River Ouſe* coming along by the *Town of Bedford*, " *Huntington*, and *St. Ives*, and ſo paſſing down to his *Outfall* at *Lynn*, *is a good-* " *ly fair River throughout*; *and from below* Ely *downward runneth with ſuch a* " *Current*, *that as it is abſolutely the beſt Sewer of all that Country*, ſo it is by " the great Fall of Waters thereinto, as well from the *River* of *Grant* out of " *Cambridgeſhire*, as from the Drains which come out of the *Iſle of Ely*, much " overcharged in *Winter*, and in *Time of Floods*, to the Prejudice of the adja- " cent Parts: For Remedy whereof, former Times have provided ſome *By-* " *Sewers* or *Slakers*, and among others the *Weſt-Water* at *Erith-Bridge* below " *St. Ives*, to receive Part of the Overcharge of Water, and to eaſe the *River* " where it is *narrow* and *knare*, and the *Country* apt to be overflow'd; and to " carry it through the Iſle of *Ely* (tho' otherwiſe to their Prejudice) down again " into the ſame *River* by *divers Drains* and *Inlets*, where the *Channel* for *Breadth* " and *Depth* affords better Paſſage and Conveyance to the *Sea:* But now the ſaid " *Weſt-Water* doth run a contrary Courſe for want of cleanſing and *dyking*, and " falleth into *Ouſe* at *Erith-Bridge*, where it ſhould take his *Courſe* out, as ap- " pear'd upon *View* of the *Committees*, to the overcharging of the ſaid River, in- " ſtead of ſlaking or disburthening the ſame.

" *The Country along the River Side*, *both in* Cambridgeſhire *and in the* Iſle, *be-* " *ing a very rich Soil*, *well inhabited*, *and not otherwiſe much troubled with Waters*, " *but in Winter and Time of Floods*, brought many Queſtions and Differences " into Debate concerning Banks and Sewers that had relation to *Meum* and *Tu-* " *um*, and were inſiſted upon with more Inſtance and Siding than any other Part " of the Buſineſs, tho' more tending to the Publick: All which, upon View,

" were order'd by the Committees, however with little Satisfaction to ſome " Part or other, wherewith your *Lordſhips* may chance hereafter to be troubled.

" Only there remaineth two Difficulties: The firſt, That whereas the *ſaid* " *River of* Ouſe, *from* Huntingdon *to the High-Bridge at* Ely, *was generally foul* " *and overgrown with Weeds, ſtopped with Weres, and againſt* Ely, *as in other* " *Parts, made ſhallow by Gravel and Fords; which they call Hardes, and in reaſon* " *ought to be removed for the opening of the River, and readier Paſſage of the* " *Water in Time of Floods:* Yet it was generally acknowledged, that the remo- " ving thoſe Impediments, eſpecially near and about *Ely*, would take away all " *Navigation* and Paſſage by Boats in Summer-time, to the great Prejudice of " the *Univerſity* and *Town* of *Cambridge*; whereof the *Vicechancellor*, Dr. *Ri-* " *chardſon*, being preſent at the *Seſſion* at *Huntingdon*, made earneſt Inſtance " that due Conſideration might be had; ſo that unleſs there could be Means " found to make theſe Stops to be no Diſadvantage or Check in Time of *Floods* " and in Winter, as the ſame are a Benefit in Summer, and a Help to *Naviga-* " *tion*, it can hardly be accommodated without Inconvenience, *&c.*

But Mr. *Atkins* ſays, It is an Error to think that *Ely Hardes* do hold up any Water for the bettering of *Navigation.* My Reaſon, ſays he, is——' For con- ' ſidering there is always Water ſufficient for Lighters and Flat-bottom Boats to ' paſs loaden, and that the Body of the Water on theſe Hardes is more than ' double the ordinary Breadth of the reſt of the ſame River, it cannot be but ' it uttereth as much Water as the common and ordinary Courſe of the reſt of the ' River.

' So as it may in a word be ſaid, they ſtop no Water for the bettering of *Na-* ' *vigation* in Summer; for what they want in *Depth* they have in *Width.*

' But the *Hardes* above *Ely* are in narrow Parts of the *River*, whereby they ' very much hinder the *Land-floods* in their Paſſage. Eſpecially thoſe about ' *Stretham*, which of all others are the worſt, being Gravels laid over the *River* ' on purpoſe by Cart to fetch their Fodder and Hay out of the *Fens.* Theſe ' *Gravels* being three or four in Number do great harm to the Draining, and can- ' not be ſaid to be any thing beneficial to the *Navigation*, conſidering that here ' the *Ouſe* continually affordeth ſuch Store of Water, as there never wanteth: So ' that the whole Way of *Ouſe* from St. *Ives* to *Littleport* may be made deeper, ' and yet never want Water.

And of *Weres* Mr. *Atkins* ſaith there were eight between *Overcote* and *Harri-* *mere*; which Stops, together with the *Gravels* laid croſs the River, and Weeds in the River, made the Waters of *Ouſe* run violently into the *Weſt-Water* in Time of great Floods.

And the *Weſt-Water* falling over *Erith-Cauſey* did in *January* 1602. drown *Haddenham-Delphs*, otherwiſe ſafe, *their Banks being made of Clay mixed.*

That Weeds, Weres, Stamps, *&c.* had this fatal Effect of drowning the Country, is too well proved in the preceding Section: And ſo ſenſible of it was my Lord *Popham*, that in his Project for *draining the Level*, all thoſe Impedi- ments were to be removed, and, if Occaſion had required, *Navigable Sluices* were to have been made beyond the Tide-way, to hold up the Water in Sum- mer-time for the Service of *Navigation*, which could have been opened to let the Land-floods paſs in the Winter. But I am firmly of Mr. *Atkins* his Opinion, that none would have been wanted.

Sir *Clement Edmunds* alſo farther reported, ' That the *Weſt-Water* which for- ' merly took its Courſe out of *Ouſe* at *Erith-Bridge*, did now, as appeared upon ' View, run a contrary Courſe for want of cleanſing and dyking, and falleth in- ' to *Ouſe* at *Erith-Bridge*, where it ſhould have its Courſe out (very much to the ' Damage of the Iſle of *Ely* in Time of Floods) and tō the overburdening of ' the *River* inſtead of ſlaking it.

Mr. *Atkins* ſays, This *Branch* of *Ouſe* was utterly decayed from *Erith* to *Ben-* *wick.* There have been divers Conſultations about the opening of it, which was much inſiſted on; and 'twas thought the Charge of dyking and cleanſing merely ſtaid it.

When the opening of this *Weſt-Water* could not be obtain'd——*Sutton-lode* falling out of the *Weſt-Water* a Mile below *Erith*, and paſſing *Eaſtward* by *Sutton* in the Iſle, and thence by the Edge of the High-Lands and the Fens to *Down-* *ham* Park, and ſo to *Littleport*, and into the *Ouſe* at *Littleport-Chair:* This Branch was ordained by a Law to be opened. But

But becauſe it would weaken the Paſſage of the *Weſt-Water*, by taking away the Head of the Water which ſhould help to maintain the whole Paſſage, *and utterly overthrow all Navigation that Way, it was by a Letter procured from the Lords of the Council ſtayed*, and ſo nothing done therein.

And thoſe Lords wiſely conſidering, that the opening of this or that particular Drain for this or that particular Part of the Country, would ſignify little or nothing toward the general Draining, and be in effect throwing Money away; their Lordſhips therefore (and upon hearing Sir *Clement Edmund*'s Report) ordered, That the Earl of *Arundel*, Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, the Lord *Carew*, Mr. Treaſurer, Mr. Comptroler of his Majeſty's Houſhold, Mr. Chancellor of the *Exchequer*, the Maſter of the *Rolls*, and Sir *Edward Coke*, or any four of them, ſhould take Conſideration of the State of the Buſineſs, &c. and prepare ſome Opinion to be delivered to the Board, of what preſent Courſe might be fit to be taken herein.

In purſuance of this Order, the Earl of *Arundel*, Sir *William Ayloff*, Kt. Bart. *Anthony Thomas*, Eſq; and others, took a view of the Fens, and cauſed Mr. *Hoxham*, Surveyor to the Earl, to make a Map thereof. 'And they (to uſe their own 'Words) having the Aſſiſtance of ſome rare Engineers which met them, and receiving 'and making ſpecial Obſervations of theſe Countries, reſolv'd (by God's Help) at 'their own and their Friends Charges and Expences, without raiſing or levying 'any Taxes, Contributions or Sums of Money of or upon the Inhabitants of thoſe 'Countries, or any his Majeſty's Subjects, to venture the Enterprizing of the 'Draining or all; or the moſt Part; yea, of many thouſand Acres of the Fens, 'or ſurrounded Grounds, and to make them dry, and to be good and profitable 'Meadows and Paſtures, and ſo to continue.

They laid this Deſign before the Privy-Council, at the Court at *Greenwich*, the 17th of *May*, 1619. and deſir'd to have theſe following Conditions or Contracts to be made to them, and confirmed by good and lawful Aſſurance. *May* 17. 1619.

'*Of all the King's Majeſty's Lands drowned with Freſh or Salt Water in ſeveral 'Counties, which we ſhall recover and make dry, the Fee-Farm Rent of Four-pence 'per Acre, over and above all Rents or Revenues now in Being, or coming to his 'Majeſty.*

'*Of all the Prince's Highneſs Lands, the like Contract reſpectively.*

Of all the Subjects Lands,
- '1. *Which are ſo drowned or ſurrounded all the Year, to have two third Parts of all the ſame Lands to us and our Heirs, to be allowed and aſſigned to hold in Severality and Perpetuity for ever.*
- '2. *And all thoſe Lands which are by half the Year's Space, or more than half the Year drowned: To have the one half of the ſame Lands to us and our Heirs in Perpetuity.*

'And we hope, by God's Grace, ſpeedily to drain a great Part of the ſaid 'Fens; and all, or the moſt Part, within three Years after the Contracts made 'with his Majeſty and his Subjects,

The King and Council approving theſe Offers, his Majeſty ſent (by Sir *William Ayloff* and *Anthony Thomas*, Eſq;) the following Letter to the Commiſſioners of Sewers in the Counties of *Cambridge*, Iſle of *Ely*, *Suffolk*, *Norfolk*, *Lincoln*, *Northampton*, *Huntingdon*.

JAMES *Rex*.

'RIght truſty and well-beloved, we greet you well. Whereas Sir *William 'Ayloff*, Kt. Bart. *Anthony Thomas*, Eſq; and others, have undertaken a 'great and worthy Work at their own Charge to drain the Fens in the ſeveral 'Counties of *Cambridge* and the Iſle of *Ely*, *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, *Lincoln*, *Northampton*, *Huntingdon*, &c. whereby a great and ineſtimable Profit and Increaſe 'will ariſe to this Kingdom, to the general Good and Welfare of our People: 'Beſides that, it is likely not only to diſburthen and free the ſaid Counties and 'the Inhabitants thereof from the continual Taxes and Charges, which other-'wiſe are of Neceſſity to be laid upon them; but alſo to reconcile and utterly

‘ take away all Differences and Diſcontents happening amongſt ſome of you ‘ touching the levying of thoſe Taxes: And for that they the ſaid Undertakers ‘ have already concluded in Point with us concerning their Recompence for draining ‘ ſuch Lands as belong unto us, and our dear Son the Prince; and that their ‘ Deſire is, with all Expedition, to make reaſonable Contracts with you, and ‘ others of our Subjects, Owners of the Fenn-Lands, according to the true In- ‘ tent of the Statute-Law in that Behalf heretofore made: We therefore have ‘ thought fit to recommend them and their Deſign to your eſpecial Care, requi- ‘ ring you not only to aid and aſſiſt them in the preſent expediting of their ſaid ‘ Contracts, but alſo from time to time to further them with your Authority in ‘ all reaſonoble and lawful Things requiſite for the Execution of their Work, to ‘ the uttermoſt of your Power, and Extent of your Commiſſion, ſtraightly charg- ‘ ing and commanding all Perſons whatſoever to be reſpective and conformable ‘ to this our Pleaſure; and if any be refractory, that you correct and chaſtiſe ‘ their Obſtinacy according to Juſtice, or elſe to certify their Names unto us, or ‘ our Privy-Council, that farther Order may be taken with them.

Given at our Caſtle of Windſor *the* 4*th Day of* September, *in the* 17*th Year of our Reign of* Great Britain, France *and* Ireland.

This Letter, ſign'd by his Majeſty's own Hand, and another to the ſame Effect, ſign'd by the Lords of the Privy-Council, were brought by the Undertakers to the Commiſſioners in the Counties aforeſaid, and were delivered to them at a General Seſſion of Sewers holden at *Peterburgh* the 8th Day of the ſame *September*.

And it was there agreed, That in Obedience to the Inſtructions received by them from the King's Majeſty, *&c.* the Undertakers before ſpecified ſhould have the free Conſent of that Court to proceed; and likewiſe their Furtherance in ſuch Contracts as they ſhould make with the Lords, Owners, and Commoners intereſſed in the ſaid Fens, *&c.*-But the Court let them know, that *before they begun any Works, they ſhould give Security that they would not impair the Navigation in the Rivers of* Ouſe, Nene, *&c.* And when they had given Security, they ſhould ſhew the Country the Means they intended in the draining of the Level, that they might be ſatisfied there would be *no Prejudice of Navigation in the Rivers* Ouſe *and* Grant, *or Hurt done to Marſhland.* If it was believed there would, all farther Proceedings were to be ſtay'd.

Bnt the Undertakers deſiring that they might not be preſſed to diſcover the Means in every Particular, until their Agreement with the Country were made perfect and ſure; and the Commiſſioners having no Power to give the Undertakers any Man's Land without his voluntary Conſent, and of agreeing with them; and on this Occaſion many Debates ariſing, that made either Side unable to come to a Concluſion, the Undertakers repreſented theſe Difficulties to the Privy-Council, and thereupon Letters were written from that Board, *Feb.* 29. 1620. *to the Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen concerned in the Fens, commanding them to attend his Majeſty.* And accordingly they did attend.

April 11. 1620. At *Whitehall* the 11th of *April*, 1620. Preſent

The King's moſt Excellent Majeſty.

The Prince his Highneſs.

Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury.*	Lord Biſhop of *Winton.*
Lord Chancellor.	Lord *Digby.*
Lord Steward.	Mr. Treaſurer.
Lord Marq. *Bucks.*	Mr. Comptroller.
Lord Marq. *Hamilton.*	Mr. Secretary *Naunton.*
Lord Chamberlain.	Mr. Secretary *Calvers.*
Earl of *Arundell.*	Mr. Chancellor of the *Exchequer.*
Earl of *Kellie.*	Maſter of the *Rolls.*
Lord Viſcount *Doncaſter.*	Maſter of the *Wards.*

‘ And the Buſineſs concerning the Fens was heard at large. And for as much ‘ as many Differences aroſe between the Undertakers on the one Part, and the

'*Commiſſioners of the Sewers*, *Owners of Lands*, and others who attended in Be-
'half of the *Univerſity* of *Cambridge* and the *Town* of *Lyn*, to whom the *Under-*
'*takers* offered to give ſuch ſufficient Caution *not to impair the Navigation in the*
'*Rivers of* Grant *and* Ouſe, as the *Board* ſhould think fit; *his Majeſty* order'd
'that the Undertakers ſhould, upon *Thurſday* Morning next, exhibit in writing
'*what it was they promiſed to effect:* Secondly, To ſpecify *what they demanded*
'*as Recompence for their Labour.* Which Writing of theirs ſhould after be given
'to the Commiſſioners, who in caſe they ſhould not be provided for preſent
'Anſwer, a Day ſhould be given them till the Beginning of the next Term,
'when his *Majeſty* and his *Council* would ſet a final Order betwixt them.

Ext. ALBERTUS MORTON.

According to theſe Orders, the Undertakers drew up Propoſals, which were delivered to the Commiſſioners of Sewers the 13th of *April* following; and are theſe:

'We the Undertakers, whoſe Names are hereunder written, do really intend
'and purpoſe, at our own and our Friends Charges, *without any Tax to be raiſed*
'*or levied upon the Country, effectually to drain and make dry the whole Level and*
'*Latitude of the Fens in the ſeveral Counties of* Northampton, Huntingdon,
'Cambridge, *and the Iſle of* Ely, Suffolk, Norfolk, *and* Lincoln, *as the ſame do*
'*lie ſubject and properly diſpoſed to their natural Outfals into the Sea*; but we
'mind not to undertake the deep Meres, ſtagnate Pools or Gulphs, whoſe Depth
'doth exceed the Deſcent of the Fall of the Waters natural Current into the
'Sea, for that ſuch Profundities are under our Level.

'This Work once done and perfected, we likewiſe mind and plainly intend
'and undertake, with our like Charge, Care and Providence, and with Aſſurance
'of competent Land for ever to ſtand liable and bound thereunto, *to maintain*
'*and repair the Works, which ſhall be the Means of the Draining, and thereby to*
'*make the ſame drained Lands ſo to continue dry in ſuch Plight and Form as uſual-*
'*ly River-Meadows are*; wherein we deſire all honeſt and plain Conſtruction
'hereof by the Country.

'The Time wherein, by God's Permiſſion, we intend to effect this Draining,
'ſhall be three Years from and after a perfect Bargain, Contract and Agreement
'had and made by his Majeſty, and accepted by us, for ſuch Parts and Por-
'tions of the Fen-Lands, as ſhall be a meet and competent Recompence to us
'and our Friends adventuring with us, for our Merit, Induſtry, Pains, Travel,
'Charge and Adventure in ſo great a Buſineſs. The ſame Lands which are ſo
'ſet out for our Recompence, to be directly and apparently made known and
'ſet out by Metes and Bounds in Severalty, and ſufficiently aſſured to us and
'our Heirs and Aſſigns for ever, in due Form of Law, before the Work be be-
'gun; *upon Condition to be void for Default of doing, and in no wiſe to be received*
'*by us or our Heirs or Aſſigns, till from and after the Work be done.*

'Toward this Work of Draining, as we have formerly declared for the bet-
'ter Content of the Country, ſo we now revive and declare the ſame our Reſo-
'lution to be, that we will *open the ancient and natural Outfalls of* Nene *and*
'Welland, *and make their Rivers navigable from the Sea as high as* Wisbech *and*
'Spalding, the ſame being utterly ſilted and loſt, and not to be recovered with-
'out an infinite great Charge, by the Opinion of the moſt judicious Commiſſioners
'of Sewers: But how far the opening of theſe Outfalls ſhall tend to the Per-
'fection of our whole Work, we hope we need not to declare.

'And for all other Means which we intend, or ſhall uſe, therein we humbly
'deſire that we may not be preſſed to diſcover, until our Agreement be made
'perfect and aſſured: And then, as our Duty is, we will abide his Majeſty's
'Pleaſure therein.

'In theſe our Proceedings to, and in our Work of Draining the ſaid whole
'Level of the Fens, we ſhall not forget, nor in any wiſe *neglect to perform the*
'*Preſervation of the River between* Cambridge *and* Lyn, *according to his Ma-*
'*jeſty's Command, not to hurt the Navigation thereof. As alſo that we ſhall not*
'*prejudice the Port or Haven of* Lyn, otherwiſe than as we have often expreſſed
'our ſelves to the Country. That we ſhall by opening the ſaid other Outfalls

‘ of *Nene* and *Welland* draw the Exceſs of Waters, which improperly have now ‘ their Courſe to the Outfall of *Lyn*, to their own more proper and natural ‘ Outfalls of *Spalding* and *Wisbech*; which is no wrong, but rightful and juſt to ‘ do.

‘ In Recompence whereof, we do make our particular Demand of Parts and ‘ Shares out of the particular Fens within the Level aforeſaid, ſo far forth as we ‘ can get Knowledge of them, having little Inſtruction or Information from the ‘ Owners or Dwellers there, who rather wholly endeavour to conceal the ſame ‘ from us. And therefore, ſaving and reſerving to us and our Heirs and Aſſigns ‘ ſuch Right or Intereſt, as ſhall or may accrue or belong unto us by the Bargain ‘ which we ſhall make for, or unto any other Parcel of Fens within the ſaid Le- ‘ vel herein omitted, and not expreſſed:

We demand as followeth:

Your MAJESTY'S

Humble Subjects,

WILLIAM AYLOFFE.
ANTHONY THOMAS.

The DEMANDS.

1. *Burrough* Great Fen ——— One Third Part.
2. *Burrough* Little Fen, *Eye* and *Flag* Fen ——— One Sixth Part.
3. *Crowland* Fen, three Pieces ——— One Fourth Part.
4. *Thorny* Fens ——— One Half Part.
5. *Wisbech* High Fen, *Sutton* and *Throcknell* ——— One Third Part.
6. Fens on both Sides of *March* River, between *Darcy-lode* on the *South*, and *Needham* Fen *North* ——— Two third Parts.
7. *Wittleſey* Fen ——— One half Part.
8. *Stanground* ——— One Fifth Part.
9. *Ramſey* Fens ——— One Half Part.
10. *Huntingdon* Fens on the *Weſt* of *Ramſey* by the River of *Nene* on the *North* up to *Yaxley*, and the Skirts on the *South* and *Weſt* ——— One Half Part.
11. *Huntingdon* Fens from *Erith-Bridge* up to *Ramſey* by the *Weſt* Water, and the River of *Nene Eaſt* and *North* ——— One third Part.
12. *Donnington* Fens in common ——— One Half Part.
13. *Donnington* Fen in Several ——— One Sixth Part.
14. Fens between the *Weſt* Water *Weſt*, *Sutton-lode* in the Iſle of *Ely*, and *Coveny* Drain *South*, *Ox Willow-lode Eaſt*, *Cox-lode* and *Chatteris-lode North*; together with *Chatteris* Fens on the other Side to *Donnington* ——— One Third Part.
15. *Hunny* Fen ——— One Tenth Part.
16. *Sutton* and *Haddenham* Fens ——— One Eighth Part.
17. *Grunty* Fen ——— One Third Part.
18. A Fen by *Sutton-lode* and *Coveney*, between *Downham* Hards -- One Fourth Part.
19. *Downham Wod*-Fen, and other Fens of *Ely*, between *Littleport* Grounds and the *Ouſe*, *Ely* Uplands and *Searletree-lode* — One Half Part.
20. *Littleport* Fens on both Sides the *Ouſe* ——— One Third Part.
21. Other Fens between *Darcey-lode North*, and *Welney* River *Eaſt* - One Third Part.
22. Fens in *Upwell* and *Outwell* ——— One Half Part.
23. The Fens between *Welny* River and *Welny* Cauſey ——— One Half Part.
24. The *Hale*, and Mr. *Hawes*'s Fen ——— One Half Part.
25. Fens on the *North* of *Stoke* River, from *Stoke* Bridge to the great River between *Helgay* and *Stoke* ——— One Fourth Part.
26. Fens between *Stoke* River *North*, and *Brandon* River *South* -- One Fourth Part.
27. Fens between *Brandon* River *North*, *Mildenhall* River *South*, and *Littleport* Fen *Weſt* ——— One Third Part.
28. Fens between *Mildenhall* River and the great River up to *Harrimere*, and the Uplands of *Iſleham*, *Fordham*, and *Soham* ——— One Fourth Part.

29. *Soham* Fens by *Wicken* Hards *South* ——— One Sixth Part.
30. Fens between *Wicken* Hards on the *South*, *Homing* Fen, *Qui*, and the River *Grant Weſt* ——— } One Fourth Part.
31. Fens on the *South* of *Qui*, compaſſing about *Fulborne* Field--One Fourth Part.
32. Fens between the River of *Grant Eaſt*, and the Hards of *Milton*, *Waterbeach*, and *Denny* Abby *Weſt*; and ſo extending *Weſt* between the River of *Ouſe* on the *North*, and the *Hard-land South*, up to St. *Ives* Bridge; and a Part on the other Side the *Ouſe* between *Erith* and St. *Ives* ——— } One Eighth Part of the better. } One Fourth Part of of the worſt.
33. Fens or drowned Lands on the *North* Side of *Wisbech*— Two Third Parts.

" The ſame Demands being proportionable, or rather leſs than the Rates and " Parts of Lands which are already allowed and decreed to us by ſome others " of the Commiſſioners, which are agreed and granted to us by private and vo- " luntary Contracts made and concluded with ſeveral Noblemen, Knights, Gen- " tlemen, and others, Owners and Commiſſioners of and for Lands in the ſame " or like Fens; which particular Contracts we have under the Parties Hands. " All which proportionable Parts or Shares, if they ſhall be allow'd and grant- " ed unto us, yet may the Land-Owners and Commoners undoubtedly be great " Gainers upon the Improvement of the reſt of the ſame Fens by our Draining.

To theſe Propoſals of the Undertakers, the Commiſſioners of Sewers in the Counties of Northampton, Huntingdon, Cambridge, *&c. gave in their Anſwer by Mr.* Bing *to my Lord Chancellor at* York-houſe *the* 11*th Day of* May, 1720. *as followeth.*

" Our Anſwer thereunto is, That we have no Power in any due Form of " Law to take any Man's Land from the proper Owner thereof without his vo- " luntary Conſent. But the Authority which the Commiſſioners have by Ver- " tue of their Commiſſion (unto the Obſervance whereof they are ſtrictly ſworn) " is only *to rate the Charge of every particular Man toward any ſuch general* " *Work, according to the Profit which every ſuch Perſon ſhall receive by the ſame:* " And for as much as 'tis impoſſible to be diſcerned before the Work is finiſhed, " either who ſhall have Profit by the intended Work, or how much; the Com- " miſſioners cannot legally procure any ſuch prepoſterous Aſſurance before-hand " of Lands to the Undertakers, as they demand. But if the Undertakers will " be conſtant to their firſt Propoſitions, which themſelves at divers Seſſions of " Sewers did publiſh to the Country: Which was, *That they required no other* " *Recompence for their intended Work, than a Moiety only of that clear Profit,* " *which by their ſole Induſtry and Charge they ſhould bring unto each particular* " *Owner of thoſe ſurrounded Grounds more than formerly was received:* We ſhall " be ready (as at firſt we were) to give the Undertakers all lawful Furthe- " rance and Aſſiſtance.

" *Nevertheleſs with this Caution, that before they begin the Work, they put in ſuf-* " *ficient Security, That they will in no Sort impair Navigation, eſpecially in the* " *Rivers* Ouſe *and* Grant, *of which his Majeſty out of his ever watchful Care* " *for the publick Good, was moſt tender at the laſt Hearing; and not without* " *ſpecial Cauſe, conſidering that the principal Marts of this Realm (by which* " *the Univerſity of* Cambridge, *and all the Inland Counties of this Kingdom,* " *are furniſhed of all Sorts of Proviſion) are principally maintain'd by the Na-* " *vigation of theſe Rivers.*

" Upon which Terms, if the Undertakers ſhall refuſe to go forward, we are " then moſt humble Suitors unto his Royal Majeſty, that we may loſe no more " time by entertaining any farther Treaty with them, but may be left to the " ſpeedy Draining our ſelves, according to the ancient Courſe and legal Power " of our Commiſſion.

The Country having thus deliver'd to the Lord Chancellor in writing, how far they would condeſcend to the Propoſals of the Undertakers, and ſhew'd their Reaſons for ſuch Points whereat they took Exception: They were laid before the King and Council, and his Majeſty was pleas'd to command the

Coun-

Council to take the Premiſes into their Conſideration, and to order ſome Courſe for the Accommodation and Settlement thereof: And thoſe Lords did, upon a full hearing of the Buſineſs, agree and conclude upon the enſuing Articles:

" 1. Firſt, That according to an Offer then made on the Part of the Coun-
" try, good Security ſhall be given to the Undertakers for a Moiety of the clear
" Profit, which by the Draining ſhall be improved upon every Man's Ground
" above the Rate that now the ſame are valued at; and that the Security ſhall
" be partly from the Owners, and partly in caſe of Common, by the Aid of the
" Commiſſioners of Sewers; with this Condition, that the Lands and Parties of
" each County ſhall be rated by the Commiſſioners of the ſame County.

2. " Concerning the *Prejudice of Navigation in the Rivers of* Ouſe *and* Grant,
" it is thought fit and ordered, That the Undertakers being agreed with for
" their Security in Form aforeſaid, *they ſhew the Means they intend in the Drain-*
" *ing of thoſe Levels unto the Country; and thereupon if the Country find it preju-*
" *dicial either to Marſhland*, or otherwiſe, and preſent their Reaſons to the Board,
" their Lordſhips concurring therewith, all farther Proceeding to be ſtayed.

3. " That Conſideration be had, that Particulars receive no Damage by this
" Draining, but the Owners receive Satisfaction out of thoſe that receive Com-
" modity.

4. " That no Land ſhall contribute to this Charge that is now at 8*s. per*
" Acre, or upwards, except it lie in ſmall Quantities, and intermixed with other
" Lands, that the Work cannot go on without it, and then to have a Moiety of
" Profit, *ut ſupra*.

5. " Their Lordſhips intermeddle not with any Parts of the Work that are
" already ſettled and agreed upon.

6. " The Undertakers, according to their Promiſe, to begin the Work within
" one Month after the Agreement ſhall be ſettled.

" Which being thus ſettled and agreed upon the laſt Day of *May* laſt, with
" the Conſent of both Parties, for ought appear'd to their Lordſhips; for as much
" nevertheleſs as the Undertakers have not hitherto entred upon the Work, nor
" made any Proceeding therein, the Time of the Year requiring Expedition:
" (It being now the 12th Day of *July*.) It is according to his Majeſty's gra-
" cious Pleaſure and Command ordered by this Board, That the Undertakers
" ſhall either go on, according to the Articles thus agreed on at the Board, or
" otherwiſe deſiſt from that Undertaking, and hold the Country no longer in
" Suſpenſe, but to leave them to ſuch farther Courſe as ſhall be expedient. To
" which Purpoſe it is likewiſe ordered, that Copies of the Articles and Orders
" made at the Board in that Behalf be delivered out to both the Undertakers,
" and ſuch Gentlemen as attend that Service here for the Country.

Ex EDMONDES.

But theſe Undertakers were not able to make a Contract for the general Draining of the Fens, becauſe they would not declare to the Commiſſioners of Sewers, all the Means they intended toward the effecting ſo great a Work, and notwithſtanding the King and Council wrote Letters to the Commiſſioners of Sewers, to promote a good Underſtanding between the Country and the Undertakers; yet no Agreement could be made, " therefore his Majeſty, who (as Sir *Corn. Ver-*
" *muiden* ſays) for the Honour of this Kingdom, would not any longer ſuffer theſe
" Countries to be abandon'd to the Will of the Waters, nor let them lie waſte
" and unprofitable", did himſelf undertake (by a Law of Sewers) that great Work. Upon which Occaſion this * Ballad was made.

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* *Dum hæc ita tractarentur proiit in medium cauticam quoddam (mehercule) hadignobile, cui titulus,* The *Powtes* Complaint, *quod ob ipſius rei materiam nec non in Poetæ gramlui inſerendum dueci.*

COme, Brethren, of the Water, and let us all aſſemble,
To treat upon this Matter, which makes us quake and tremble;
For we ſhall rue, if it be true, the Fens be undertaken,
And where we feed in Fen and Reed, they'll feed both Beef and Bacon.

But, as Sir *William Dugdale* ſays, whether it was the great Diſturbance his Majeſty had about this Time, and after, till the End of his Reign, for the regaining the *Palatinate*, &c. or what elſe was the Impediment, I ſhall not take upon me to ſay: But certain it is, nothing was done during that King's Reign, nor until the 5. *Car.* 1. Then *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, who was Owner of near 20,000 Acres in *Thorny* and *Whittleſey*, was importuned by the Country, and by the Commiſſioners of Sewers, to undertake this great Work of Draining. And to ſecure the ſaid Earl in his Reward for ſo doing, to provide for the Security of Navigation, *&c.* the following Law of Sewers, called *Lyn* Law, was made. 1629.

The Law of Sewers made at *Lynn*, 13. *Jan.* 1630.

Preſent Forty One Commiſſioners.

CAROLUS *Dei Gratiâ Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ & Hibern. Rex, Fidei Defenſor, &c. Omnibus ad quos preſentes Literæ pervenerint, ſalutem.* 6. Caroli.

Inſpeximus Ordinationes quaſdam ſive decreta de le Sewers indentat per quoſdam Commiſſionarios noſtros virtute Commiſſionis noſtræ nuper ordinat. inact. ſtabilit. & decret. manu noſtra ſignat in Cancellar' noſtram retornat. & in filiciis ibidem de record' reſiden' in hæc verba.

CAROLUS *Rex a ceo aſſenta.*

"AT a Seſſion of Sewers at *King's-Lynn* in the County of *Norfolk*, the 13th "Day of *January*, in the ſixth Year of the Reign of our moſt gracious "Sovereign Lord King *Charles*, over *England*, *&c.* touching the Draining of

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They'll ſow both Beans and Oats, where no Man yet thought it;
Where Men did row in Boats, e'er Undertakers bought it:
But, *Ceres*, thou behold us now, let wild Oats be their Venture;
O let the Frogs and miry Bogs deſtroy where they do enter.

Behold the great Deſign, which they do now determine,
Will make our Bodies pine a Prey to Crows and Vermin:
For they do mean all Fens to drain, and Waters over-maſter;
All will be dry, and we muſt die, 'cauſe *Eſſex* Calves want Paſture.

Away with Boats and Rudder, farewel both Boots and Sketches;
No Need of th'one or t'other, Men now make better Matches;
Stilt-Makers all, and Tanners ſhall complain of this Diſaſter,
For they will make each muddy Lake for *Eſſex* Calves a Paſture.

The feather'd Fowls have Wings to fly to other Nations,
But we have no ſuch things to help our Tranſportations:
We muſt give place, O grievous Caſe, to horned Beaſt and Cattle,
Except that we can all agree to drive them out by Battel.

Wherefore let us intreat our ancient Water Nurſes,
To ſhew their Power ſo great to help us drain their Purſes;
And ſend us good old Captain *Flood* to lead us out to Battel,
Then Two-penny Jack with Scales on's Back will drive out all the Cattle.

This Noble Captain yet was never known to fail us,
But did the Conqueſt get of all that did aſſail us:
His furious Rage none could aſſuage, but to the World's great Wonder,
He bears down Banks, and breaks their Ranks and Whirligigs aſunder.

God *Eolus*, we thee pray, that thou wilt not be wanting;
Thou never ſaidſt us nay, now liſten to our Canting;
Do thou deride their Hope and Pride that purpoſe our Confuſion,
And ſend a Blaſt that they in haſte may work no good Concluſion.

Great *Neptune*, God of Seas, this Work muſt needs provoke ye;
They mean thee to diſeaſe, and with Fen-Water choak thee:
But with thy Mace do thou deface, and quite confound this Matter;
And ſend thy Sands to make dry Lands, when they ſhall want freſh Water.

And eke we pray the Moon, that thou wilt be propitious.
To ſee that nought be done to proſper the Malicious:
Tho' Summer's Heat has wrought a Feat, whereby themſelves they flatter;
Yet be ſo good to ſend a Flood, leſt *Eſſex* Calves want Water.

" the Fens and Low Grounds within the Counties of *Northampton*, *Norfolk*,
" *Suffolk*, *Lincoln*, *Cambridge*, *Huntingdon*, and the Iſle of *Ely*, within the Li-
" mits of this Commiſſion, holden in the Preſence of the Right Honou-
" rable *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, and before Sir *Robert Heath*, Kt. his Majeſty's
" Attorney-General; Sir *Miles Sandys*, Kt. and Bart. Sir *John Carlton*, Bart.
" Sir *Robert Beavil*, Kt. of the *Bath*; Sir *John Cutts*, Sir *John Peyton*, Sir *Ro-*
" *bert Bell*, Sir *John Hare*, Sir *John Poolye*, Sir *Thomas Derham*, Knights;
" Dr. *Henry Butts*, Vicechancellor of *Cambridge*; *Henry Smith*, D. D.
" *Henry Cromwell*, Jun. *Sinolphus Bell*, *John Percival*, Mayor of the Town of
" *King's-Lynn*; *Francis Parlet*, *Everard Buckworth*, *Thomas Edwards*, *Edmund*
" *Skipworth*, *Humberſton Marck*, *Thomas Dawes*, *Andrew Burrel*, *John Oldfield*,
" *Thomas Deerham*, *William Leake*, *Gregory Gawſell*, *Robert Gawſell*, *Thomas*
" *Drury*, *Thomas Croſs*, *William Hobſon*, *William Heyward*, *George Clapthorne*,
" Eſquires, and others, to the Number of Forty and One Commiſſioners of
" Sewers, then and there aſſembled by Authority of his Highneſs Commiſſion
" of Sewers to them, and others directed.

" It is ordered, enacted, adjudged and decreed as followeth:

" Whereas that great and worthy Work of Draining the Marſhes, Fens, and
" ſurrounded Grounds, lying and being within the Precincts and Limits of the
" Commiſſion of Sewers for the Counties of *Northampton*, *Lincoln*, *Norfolk*, *Suf-*
" *folk*, *Cambridge*, *Huntingdon*, and the Iſle of *Ely*, was firſt propounded in the
" Time of the Reign of King *James* of bleſſed Memory, and in the 19th Year
" of his late Majeſty's Reign; and at the Town of *Cambridge*, at a general
" Aſſembly of the Commiſſioners of Sewers there for thoſe Counties, his then
" Majeſty having declar'd by his Royal Letters, that *he himſelf would undertake*
" *the ſaid Work at his own Charge.*

" *For the Satisfaction of his Majeſty's great Expence in that Behalf, the Quan-*
" *tity of One Hundred and Twenty Thouſand Acres of the ſaid Marſh, Fenny,*
" *Waſte, and ſurrounded Grounds, was by an Act of Sewers then made, decreed*
" *to be aſſigned unto his Majeſty, his Heirs and Succeſſors, to be allotted out, held*
" *and enjoyed in ſuch manner, as by the ſaid Act of Sewers is particularly and at*
" *large expreſſed.*

" But his late Majeſty, or his now Majeſty, by reaſon of their other great and
" more important Occaſions, nor any other in their Behalf, have hitherto taken
" the ſaid Work in hand; whereby the ſaid Act, and all the Intentions thereof,
" became hitherto fruitleſs and void.

" And whereas his now Majeſty taking into his princely Conſideration the
" miſerable Eſtate of that whole Country, which of late hath been more
" ſurrounded with Waters than ever in former Times, to the Hazard of thoſe
" Parts thereof which formerly yielded ſome Profit, unto the extreme Danger
" of the Perſons and Eſtates of the Inhabitants of the Places near adjoining,
" and of rendring the Work almoſt impoſſible to be done, if in time the ſame
" be not undertaken and proſecuted effectually, hath ſeveral times recommend-
" ed the ſame to the eſpecial Care of the Commiſſioners of Sewers. And
" whereas in Performance of ſo gracious an Intention unto them for their own
" private, and for the publick Good; the Commiſſioners of Sewers, at a Seſſion
" of Sewers holden at *Huntingdon* the 20th Day of *January*, in the fifth Year of
" his now Majeſty's Reign, for the Preſervation of the ſaid Work, did lay a Tax
" of ſix Shillings the Acre upon all and every the ſaid Marſh, Fenny, Waſte,
" and ſurrounded Grounds, to be paid within a certain time then appointed,
" and now long ſince paſt in the ſaid mentioned Act expreſſed; which
" Tax or Sum of ſix Shillings the Acre, nor any Part thereof, was paid accord-
" ing to the ſaid Act. And whereas at a Seſſion of Sewers held at *King's-Lynn*
" in the ſaid County of *Norfolk*, upon the firſt Day of *September* now laſt paſt,
" the Commiſſioners of Sewers then and there aſſembled, being forty ſeven in
" Number, on behalf of themſelves and the reſt of the Country, did contract
" with Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*, Kt. *That he the ſaid Sir* Cornelius *ſhould at his*
" *own Charge undertake and perform the Draining of the ſaid Marſh,*
" *Fenny, Waſte, and ſurrounded Grounds, in ſuch ſort as hereafter in and by theſe*
" *Preſents is expreſſed. And that he the ſaid* Cornelius *his Heirs and Aſſigns*
" *ſhould for his and their Recompence have and enjoy* 90,000 *Acres, Parcel of the*
" *ſaid Marſh, Fenny, Waſte, and ſurrounded Grounds, to be allotted and aſſigned*

" *unto him equally and indifferently, in ſuch Sort, Manner and Form, as hereafter*
" *is and by theſe Preſents ſhall be expreſſed.* And whereas he the ſaid *Cornelius*
" *Vermuiden* hath upon a Map or Card deſcribed the ſaid Fenny, Marſh, Waſte,
" and ſurrounded Grounds, and the Outfalls thereof, by Lines or other
" Deſcriptions; and alſo by writing expreſſed and ſet down to the Commiſſioners
" of Sewers, what Drains, Saſſes, Sluices, Banks, Cuts, and other Works he
" intended to make for the Draining of the ſaid ſurrounded Grounds, which
" was well approved of by the ſaid Commiſſioners now preſent. And he was
" contented to have undertaken the ſaid Work, ſo as he might have had 95000
" Acres in all to be allotted and aſſured unto him for his Charges and Pains, and
" not otherwiſe. But the ſaid Commiſſioners and Country being un-
" willing to enlarge the Quantity or Number of Acres unto him, and the Coun-
" try, by their ſeveral Petitions remaining with the Clerk of the Sewers, ſhew-
" ing much Unwillingneſs that any *Contract ſhould be made with an Alien born,*
" *or any other Stranger. And being humble Suitors to the Right Honourable the*
" *Earl of* Bedford, *now preſent, that for ſo great and ſo noble a Work, ſo much*
" *concerning the whole Country, and his Lordſhip alſo in his own particular, would*
" *be the Undertaker thereof; which Motion proceeding ſo freely from the*
" *Country, and being ſeconded by the Deſires of all the Commiſſioners now preſent,*
" *his Lordſhip yielded unto, and did agree to undertake the ſaid Work. Now the*
" *ſaid Earl, according to the Agreements in theſe Preſents expreſſed, doth promiſe*
" *and undertake, that he ſhall and will do his beſt Endeavour, at his own Charge,*
" *to drain the ſaid Marſh, Fenny, Waſte, and ſurrounded Grounds, in ſuch man-*
" *ner, as they ſhall be fit for Meadow, or Paſture, or Arable; and ſhall*
" *begin the ſaid Work this preſent Year, and continue and go on with the* ſaid
" Work without Ceſſation, except at ſuch times only as ſhall be unſeaſonable for
" that Purpoſe, until the whole Work ſhall be fully finiſhed; and that by God's
" Bleſſing he will fully finiſh the ſame within the Compaſs of ſix Years, to be
" accounted from the firſt Day of *October* now next enſuing, unleſs he be hin-
" dred by the Interruption of the Country, or ſome others by their Means,
" Conſent, or Procurement, or by ſuch other caſual Means as the Commiſſio-
" ners of Sewers, or the greater Number of them, in their Judgment
" ſhall approve to be juſt Reaſons for the farther deferring thereof: *And the ſaid*
" *Earl to have no Recompence for his Charge and Pains, otherwiſe than according*
" *to the true Meaning of theſe Preſents hereafter expreſſed.* But becauſe the ſaid
" ſurrounded Lands are ſo ſpacious, and many Parts thereof lye ſo far diſtant
" from the Sea, and from the ſeveral Outfalls, as that it is impoſſible to con-
" trive the Works ſo, but that a great Part of the ſaid now ſurrounded
" Lands will be overflown with ſudden Waters, until by Outlets or otherwiſe
" the ſame can be diſcharg'd, and ſo by Drains or otherwiſe led along to the
" Outfalls. It is agreed, that ſuch overflowing by ſudden Waters, which ſhall
" not lye longer upon the Lands than in convenient time the ſame may paſs
" away again, ſhall not be held or eſteemed to be not draining thereof, accord-
" ing to the true Meanings of theſe Preſents. And it is farther enacted, adjudg-
" ed, ordered and decreed, That Meres, Mere-grounds and Lakes, and ſuch
" Grounds as ſhall, according to Art, and by the Approbation of the
" Commiſſioners, be beſt for Forelands and Receptacles of Waters, ſhall not be
" accounted to be ſuch Grounds as the ſaid Earl by his Agreement ſhould drain;
" nor ſhall be accounted any Part of thoſe Grounds by or out of which he is to
" have his Recompence for the ſaid Work. And it is enacted, ordered, adjudg-
" ed and decreed, That the ſaid *Earl ſhall have Ninety-five thouſand Acres of*
" *the ſaid Lands, to be indifferently allotted, aſſigned, and ſet out unto him of the*
" *ſeveral Sorts and Qualities of the ſaid Grounds, according to their ſe-*
" *veral Natures and Goodneſs, by ſix of the Commiſſioners of Sewers, whereof*
" *three to be of the* Quorum. *Upon which ſetting out, and Alotments to be made,*
" *the Commiſſioners who ſhall ſet out the ſame, are to have reſpect to the Commoners,*
" *that their Parts may lye next to their own Dwellings, as near as may convenient-*
" *ly be.* And it is agreed, That the Proportion aforeſaid intended for
" and unto the ſaid Earl as aforeſaid, ſhall be allotted and ſet out before the
" Feaſt-Day of St. *Michael the Archangel* now next enſuing, for ſo much thereof
" as before that time ſhall be ſurvey'd; and for the Reſidue, within three Months
" after the ſame ſhall be ſurvey'd. And to the end that the ſaid Work of Drain-

" ing

" ing being once performed and finiſhed, may be for ever after maintained; it
" is farther ordered, enacted, adjudged, and decreed, That the ſaid Commiſ-
" ſioners, together with the ſaid Earl, ſhall become humble Suitors to his Ma-
" jeſty, to incorporate the ſaid Earl, and ſuch as he ſhall aſſociate unto
" him, into one Body Corporate or Politick to have Continuance for ever; there-
" by to enable them the better to make Laws, Orders, and Ordinances for the
" *performing and maintaining of the ſaid Works*, and to have Power over the
" Lands aſſigned to perform and maintain the ſaid Works, as hereafter followeth,
" *but over no other Lands.* And that the whole *Ninety-five thouſand Acres ſhall*
" *be entirely made liable to the firſt doing and finiſhing thereof; and that* 40,000
" *Acres thereof, to be indifferently aſſigned and ſet out for that Purpoſe by the Com-*
" *miſſioners as aforeſaid, ſhall be liable to the Maintenance and Continuance thereof*
" *for ever.* And the ſaid Forty thouſand Acres to be under the Order
" and Government of the ſaid Corporation for the End aforeſaid. *And upon their*
" *Neglect or Default, to be under the Rule, Order, and Power of the Commiſſioners*
" *of Sewers for the Purpoſe aforeſaid.* And it is farther ordered, enacted, ad-
" judged, and decreed, That as ſoon and as often as the ſaid Earl, or his Aſſigns,
" ſhall have laid dry, and drain'd an entire Proportion of the ſaid Land fit to be
" performed as one Work, containing the Quantity of Thirty thouſand Acres,
" or more; that then and ſo often the ſaid Earl ſhall have allotted, aſſigned, ſet
" out, and aſſured unto, and for him and his Heirs and Aſſigns, his
" Proportion or Part thereof, according to the Rate and Proportion of Ninety-
" five thouſand Acres for the whole Work. It is farther ordered, enacted, ad-
" judged, and decreed, that the Owners of the ſaid Lands ſhall divide and ſever
" their Lands one from another, unleſs they ſhall rather deſire to lye undivided
" by ſuch ſufficient Partitions, Dikes and Fences, as ſhall be neceſſary to convey
" and carry away the Rain-Water towards the great Drains. And that ſuch Par-
" titions and Fence-Dikes, if any ſuch ſhall be made, ſhall be made by them
" in ſuch an uniform manner, as may beſt conduce to the perfecting of
" the whole Work, by the Advice of the ſaid Earl, or of the ſaid Corporation.
" But by the Direction of the ſaid Commiſſioners, it is farther ordered, enacted,
" adjudged and decreed, That the Commiſſioners of Sewers ſhall, or may ſet
" out convenient High-ways and Paſſages by Land throughout the ſaid whole
" great Level, ſuch as by the Judgment of the ſaid Commiſſioners ſhall be ne-
" ceſſary. To make Paſſages and Drifts to and from the ſaid Lands by Bridges,
" or otherwiſe. *Provided always, and it is farther ordered, enacted, adjudged,*
" *and decreed, That the Port and Haven of* King's-Lyn *ſhall be preſerved, and the*
" *Navigation, Paſſages, and High-ways in, upon, and about all and every*
" *the navigable Rivers within the Tract of this Commiſſion; as namely, the River*
" *of* Ouſe, Grant, Neane, Welland *and* Gleane, *ſhall be likewiſe preſerved, and*
" *no Prejudice, Annoyance, Hurt or Hindrance be done to them, or any of them, by*
" *any the means aforeſaid.* And if it *ſhall happen that any ſuch Prejudice, An-*
" *noyance, Hurt, or Hindrance ſhall be committed or done, in, upon, or about any*
" *of the ſaid Navigable Rivers contrary to the Meaning and Intent of this Law;*
" *then upon Complaint made thereof, it ſhall and may be lawful, from time to time,*
" *for Eight of the ſaid Commiſſioners, whereof the Vicechancellor of the*
" *Univerſity of* Cambridge *for the time being, and the Mayors of* King's-Lyn
" *aforeſaid and* Cambridge *for the time alſo being, ſhall be Three, if they will be*
" *preſent, to reform, abate, proſtrate, and amove all ſuch Prejudices, Annoyances,*
" *Hurts and Hindrances, and every of them; ſo that the ancient Navigation, Paſ-*
" *ſages and High-ways may be reſtored and continued in, upon, and about the ſaid*
" *Navigable Rivers, as heretofore hath been uſed and accuſtomed, any thing in*
" *this Law to the contrary, in any ways notwithſtanding.* And it is farther or-
" dered, enacted, adjudged, and decreed, That for the Safety of *Holland*, Hun-
" dred of *Wisbech*, and other Parts thereabouts, *Clows-croſs* Drain ſhall
" be kept within Soil or Banks; or if any Prejudice ſhall happen thereby,
" that *Six of the Commiſſioners ſhall from time to time reform the Exceſſes*; or elſe
" that the ſaid Earl, or his Aſſigns, ſhall make Recompence for the Loſſes which
" ſhall happen thereby, to the particular Owners of the Lands thereby annoy-
" ed. It is farther ordered, enacted, adjudged, and decreed, That the new Ri-
" vers, Cuts and Drains to be made by the ſaid Earl and his Aſſigns, and the
" Banks thereof, and the Forelands on the Inſide of the Banks, not exceeding

" fifty or threeſcore Feet at the moſt in Breadth, ſhall belong and be
" unto the ſaid Earl, his Heirs and Aſſigns, in reſpect he and they are to main-
" tain the ſame, he and they paying for the ſeveral Lands of any particular
" Owner thereof ſuch Recompence as the Commiſſioners ſhall think fit. And
" that there ſhall be no Paſſages made or ſuffered by, or upon the ſaid Banks, ex-
" cept only for towing of Boats along the ſame, in ſuch ſort as ſhall be allow'd
" by the Commiſſioners. But it is ordered, enacted, adjudged, and decreed,
" That the old and ancient Rivers and Drains, and the Fiſhings thereof, ſhall be
" and continue unto the Owners thereof in ſuch ſort as formerly they
" did, or hereafter ſhall of right belong; only they ſhall not thereon, or there-
" upon, make, erect, or maintain any *Weres*, *Fiſh-grates*, *Dams*, *or other Impe-*
" *diments*, *whereby the River or Paſſage of the Water may be hindred*; which if
" at any time they ſhall do, and the ſame be not removed and abated by them-
" ſelves within ten Days after Monition to that Purpoſe given by the ſaid Cor-
" poration, that then the ſaid Corporation by the Warrant of the Commiſſioners
" of Sewers, or any two of them, ſhall cauſe the ſame to be removed, accord-
" ing to the Law of Sewers, at the Charge of thoſe who erected or continued
" thoſe Nuſances. And it is farther ordered, enacted, adjudged, and
" decreed, That the ſaid Earl, his Aſſigns and Workmen, may freely take ſuch
" Earth, and dig and make ſuch Drains and Cuts for the making and maintain-
" ing of all and every the ſaid Works, of and from the Lands next, or near ad-
" joining to the Place, as ſhall be needful; making ſuch Allowance and Re-
" compence for the Damage which may happen thereby to any private Perſon
" by digging of his ſeveral Land, as the ſaid Commiſſioners ſhall adjudge to be
" juſt and equal. And if any riotous or unlawful Act ſhall be committed, either
" openly or ſecretly, to the Deſtruction of any Part of the ſaid Works,
" or to the Hindrance or Impediment thereof; the ſaid Commiſſioners ſhall
" from time to time aſſiſt the ſaid Earl, his Aſſigns or Workmen, to repreſs and
" ſuppreſs all ſuch Inſolencies and Diſturbances; and ſhall either, at their Seſſi-
" ons or otherwiſe, do their beſt Endeavours to diſcover and ſeverely puniſh the
" Offenders. And it is farther ordered, enacted, adjudged, and decreed, That
" the Owners, Farmers, and Occupiers of all ſuch Grounds or Banks, as ſhall
" have and receive Benefit or Eaſe by theſe Works, and yet no Part of their
" Lands ſhall be taken or allotted towards the making up of the ſaid Ninety-five
" thouſand Acres, ſhall contribute and pay unto the ſaid Earl, his Heirs
" or Aſſigns, ſuch Sums of Money as the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſix of them,
" whereof three to be of the *Quorum*, ſhall rate, aſſeſs, and adjudge to be rea-
" ſonable; having reſpect to the Profit which they and every of them reſpective-
" ly ſhall receive by means of the ſaid Works, upon pain to forfeit double the
" Sum for every Month by which it ſhall be unpaid. And the ſaid Earl doth
" deſire, and the ſaid Commiſſioners for his better Encouragement do promiſe
" and agree, that they will become humble Suitors with him the ſaid Earl unto
" his Majeſty, that the Ninety five thouſand Acres, to be aſſigned and
" aſſured to him, his Heirs and Aſſigns for his Recompence as aforeſaid, may
" be held in free and common Soccage, and not otherwiſe, and without paying
" any Rent thereto, or giving any Recompence for the ſame unto the King's Ma-
" jeſty, his Heirs or Succeſſors, other than a Fee-Farm Rent of Ten Pounds by
" the Year; and if that any other Rents are, or ſhall happen to be iſſuing or
" payable out of the ſaid Ninety-five thouſand Acres, or any Part thereof, to
" his Majeſty, or to any other Perſon or Perſons, Body Politick or Corporate,
" the ſame from the time of the allotting, aſſigning and aſſuring there-
" of unto the ſaid Earl, his Heirs and Aſſigns, as aforeſaid, ſhall be charged up-
" on the Reſidue of the Lands, out of which the ſame are or ſhall be iſſuing;
" and the Part or Proportion allotted and aſſigned to the ſaid Earl, his Heirs and
" Aſſigns, for his Recompence as aforeſaid, to be thereof diſcharged or ſaved
" harmleſs for ever. *And to the end the ſaid Earl may the more confidently un-*
" *dertake and perfect the ſaid Work, and be aſſured to enjoy the ſaid Ninety-five*
" *thouſand Acres, as the Fruit and Recompence of his Labour and Charge;*
" *and that the Country may alſo be the better aſſured to have and enjoy that Bene-*
" *fit by the ſaid Work, which they expect in the Reſidue of the ſaid Lands now*
" *ſurrounded, in lieu of ſo great a Quantity and Proportion of Land, which they*
" *are to part with as aforeſaid:* It is mutually agreed, and fully concluded by

" and between the ſaid Commiſſioners and the ſaid Earl, that they ſhall become " humble Suitors to the King's moſt Excellent Majeſty, That his Majeſty would " vouchſafe to releaſe, under his great Seal, all Benefit which he might " challenge by the ſaid Law of Sewers made in the 19th Year of the Reign of " King *James*, and by any other Law or Decree of Sewers; and to approve of " and confirm this Act and Decree, and by his Royal Leave ſigning the ſame, to " declare his Royal Approbation thereof and Aſſent thereunto, and ſo to recom- " mend it to the Right Honourable the Lord-Keeper of the Great Seal, that it " may in due Form of Law be confirmed by the Decree of the Honourable " Court of *Chancery*. And that his Majeſty would alſo vouchſafe to recommend " it to the Right Honourable the Lords and others of his Majeſty's moſt " Honourable Privy-Council, that it may there be ordered as Matter of State, " not to be altered or impeached, having received the Approbation of that Ho- " nourable Board. And that whenever a Parliament ſhall be called, and a Bill " being then preferred to the Two Houſes of that High Court of Parliament, " and the ſame be then paſſed as a Law, his Majeſty would be graciouſly pleaſed, " for the full and final Confirmation thereof, to give his Royal Aſſent thereunto; " and that his Majeſty will be graciouſly pleaſed, for theſe his Royal Favours " vouchſafed to this poor diſtreſſed Part of his Country, which can receive no " Help or Relief but by his Royal Hand in giving Light to this Law, " *to accept of the Quantity of Twelve thouſand Acres, Parcel of the ſaid Ninety-* " *five thouſand Acres, to be aſſured by the ſaid Earl, or his Heirs, unto the King's* " *Majeſty, his Heirs and Succeſſors, to be held and enjoy'd by them for ever*, freed " and diſcharg'd of and from all Right, Title and Intereſt of Common, or other- " wiſe, to be claimed or demanded by the ſaid Earl, or by any other Perſon or " Perſons whatſoever. The ſaid Twelve thouſand Acres to be laid together in " one or two entire Pieces or Quantities out of ſuch of the ſaid ſurrounded " Lands, as now are Parcel of the Manor of *Whittleſey*, or other Ma- " nors thereunto adjoining; which Quantity of Twelve thouſand Acres the " ſaid Earl and Country, by an unanimous Conſent, do humbly offer to his Ma- " jeſty, as a thankful Acknowledgment of his gracious Favour in recommend- " ing the ſaid Work, and perfecting the ſame with his Royal Favour and Aſſent " as aforeſaid. Provided always, and it is laſtly ordered, enacted, adjudged, " and decreed, That when it ſhall fall out that the ſeveral Lands, or half ſe- " veral Lands of any Owner ſhall lye in ſuch ſmall Proportions together, as " do not exceed the Quantity of thirty Acres in any one Piece together, " whereby it ſhall or may be inconvenient and overchargeable to provide a pro- " portionable Part thereof to be allotted to the ſaid Earl, his Heirs and Aſſigns, " and ſevered out from the Reſidue of the ſaid Parcels of Land, which are to " remain to the Owner and Owners thereof: That in every ſuch Caſe, the ſaid " Earl, his Heirs or Aſſigns, at his or their own Choice, ſhall either have the " Land in Kind allotted unto them, and to be ſevered out by them; or ſhall " have ſo much Recompence in Money paid to him or them for the ſame, as ſix " of the ſaid Commiſſioners, whereof three to be of the *Quorum*, ſhall " reaſonably value the ſame to be worth; ſuch Money to be paid within three " Months then next following; or elſe in Default of Payment thereof, to incur " the Penalty of twenty Shillings for every Acre of the ſaid ſmall Proportion of " Land, and ſo after that Rate for every three Months the ſame ſhall be unpaid.

" In Witneſs whereof, the Commiſſioners above-named have hereunto put " their Hands and Seals the * Day and Year above-written.

Francis *Earl* of Bedford *his Undertaking.*

This Law being made, the Earl of *Bedford* fell in hand with the Work; and the better to purſue this noble Undertaking, he took in divers Participants, *viz.* *Oliver* Earl of *Bolingbroke*, *Edward* Lord *Gorges*, Sir *Robert Heath*, Sir *Miles Sandys*, Sir *William Ruſſel*, Sir *Robert Bevill*, Sir *Thomas Terringham*, Sir *Philip Vernat*, *William Sams*, Doctor of Law; *Anthony Hammond*, Eſq; *Samuel Spalding*, *Andrew Burwell*, Gent. Sir *Robert Lovet*, &c. who were to raiſe Money for carrying on the Work proportionable to the Number of Shares each had, each Share being 4000 Acres. And they began the Work; and in order to carry off the ſuperfluous Water wherewith the Fens was much annoy'd, cauſed theſe ſeveral Canals to be made, *viz.*

* I have printed this Law of Sewers in this place at large, becauſe it was this Law that gave Life to the Undertaking for a general Draining.

Bedford River (now call'd *Old Bedford*) extending from *Erith* to *Salters-lode*, 70 Foot wide, and 21 Miles long, to take off the high Floods from the River *Ouſe*, and placed at each End thereof a Sluice of great Strength. *His Works.*

Sams Cut, from *Feltwell* to *Ouſe*, 20 Feet broad, and ſix Miles long.

A Cut to drain *Mildenhall* River in *Burnt* Fen near *Littleport*, 40 Feet wide, and two Miles long.

Bevil's Leam from *Whittleſey* Mere to *Guyhirn*, 40 Feet wide, and 10 Miles long.

And likewiſe made a great Saſs at Well-Creek *End, at* Salters-lode, *to keep the Tides out of that River.*

And to the end they might accompliſh this ſo great Undertaking, and preſerve the Works after compleated;

The ſaid *Earl* and his *Participants* did the 10. *C.* 1. obtain *Letters-Patents of Incorporation*, bearing Date *March* 13. which being accompliſhed, the Works aforeſaid were carried on; and about three Years after, in a *Seſſion of Sewers* holden at *Peterborough*, *Octob.* 12. *Car.* 13. the *Level* was adjudged *Drained*; and *Ninety five thouſand Acres* were ſet out by ſix or more Commiſſioners unto the ſaid *Earl of Bedford*, his Heirs and Aſſigns. The Charge of the ſaid Work to the Earl and his Participants having been *One hundred thouſand Pounds.* *A. D.* 1634.

But notwithſtanding this great Expence, it was at length evidently diſcerned, that tho' the *Lands* were very much improved by thoſe *Works*, yet were they ſubject to Inundation, eſpecially in the Winter Seaſon: And therefore in a Seſſion of Sewers held at *Huntingdon*, 12. *Apr.* the Year enſuing, the ſaid *Earl of Bedford's* Undertaking was adjudged defective. 1638.

Hereupon King *Charles* I. taking this Buſineſs into his princely Conſideration, and foreſeeing that if this *Level* of *Four hundred thouſand Acres* could be made *Winter Lands*, they would be of extraordinary Benefit to the *Commonwealth*, viz. of 600,000 *l. per Ann.* Value, according to the Eſtimation of Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*, as alſo a great and certain Revenue to all Parties intereſſed; *his Majeſty* was therefore pleaſed to undertake, at his own Charge, to make the *Level Winter Grounds.* *K.* Charles I. *his Undertaking.*

And for the better performing thereof, he commanded divers Perſons, expert in ſuch Adventures, to give their Advice how theſe *Lands* might be made *Winter Grounds.*

Amongſt theſe Artiſts was Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*, a *Dutchman*, who had purchas'd of the King the Level of *Hatfield Chace*; one half of which Chace, *viz.* 90,000 Acres were hurtfully drowned, and he undertook to reduce it to conſtant Arable and Paſture Grounds, and which he at laſt did at the incredible Labour and Charges of above 400,000 Pounds. They all agreed that it was feaſible, but differed much in the Manner or Way to accompliſh it. Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden* his Scheme had Preference. And *July* 18. 1638. the King was declared Undertaker.——And was to have not only thoſe 95,000 Acres, which had been ſet out for the Earl of *Bedford*, but alſo 57,000 Acres more from the Country, his Majeſty's Deſign being to make the Land good *Winter Grounds.*

And the Earl of *Bedford*, in Conſideration of the Coſt he had been at, was to have 40,000 of the 95,000 Acres.

The King to manifeſt his earneſt and real Purpoſes for the ſpeedy Draining, cauſed ſeveral Works to be done, *viz.*

A Bank on the South-ſide of Morton's-leam *from* Peterborough *to* Wisbech; *and begun the like Bank on the North-ſide.* *His Works.*

A navigable Saſs at Stanground.

A new River cut between the Stone-Sluice at the Horſe-ſhoe, *and the Sea below* Wisbech, 60 *Feet broad, and two Miles long, with Banks on both Sides.*

A Sluice in the Marſhes below Tidd, *upon the Outfall of* Shire-Drain.

But here, ſaith *Dugdale*, we come to a Period of this excellent Prince's Deſign. For he being forced to raiſe an Army againſt the *Scots* in 1638. and continuing the reſt of his Life involved in an unnatural War at home, the Level lay neglected; and the Country complaining they had received no Benefit by the Draining, they entred upon the 95,000 Acres again, which had been taken from them.

Soon as the King was dead, (*viz. Ann.* 1641.) *Francis Earl of Bedford*, and his *Participants*, made their Application to the then Parliament, and had their 1641.

Caſe

Caſe committed: But the Civil War hindering them from any farther Proſecution of this Undertaking, it occaſioned the Works made by him and by the King, to decay and become in a great meaſure uſeleſs, nor were there any new Works made

1649. William *Earl of* Bedford *his Undertaking.*

Until 1649, *William Earl of Bedford*, Son and Heir to the late *Francis*, being willing to proſecute a Work, wherein his Father had been ſo great an Adventurer, made his Addreſs in Behalf of himſelf and others his *Participants* to the Convention-Parliament at *Weſtminſter*. And he obtain'd an Act (the 29th of *May* in the Year aforeſaid) entitled, *An Act for Draining the Great Level of the Fens*, &c. Which declared the ſaid *William* Earl of *Bedford*, and his Participants, to be the Undertakers of the Work of Draining the ſaid Great Level, and order'd, "That they ſhould at, or before the 10th Day of *October*, which "ſhould be in the Year of our Lord 1656. cauſe the ſame to be *drained and* "*imbanked without Prejudice to Navigation in the Rivers or Parts adjacent; and all* "*the ſaid Level ſhould be made Winter Ground, in ſuch manner as the ſaid Ri-* "*vers, or any of them, ſhould not overflow the Grounds within the ſaid Level.* "*And for bearing the Charge of Draining, and maintaining the Works from time* "*to time, ſhould have and enjoy the ſaid whole* 95000 *Acres*, as the ſame had "heretofore been ſet forth in *October*, in the 13th Year of the Reign of the late "King *Charles* I. or hereafter ſhould, by vertue of this Act, be allotted, *&c.* (See this Act at large in the Appendix.)

Under the Protection and Encouragement of this Act, the ſaid Earl and his Participants fell in hand with the Work.

And as King *Charles* I. preferred Sir *Corn. Vermuyden*'s Scheme for Draining, and followed it when he imbanked *Morton's-leam*, ſetting the Banks in ſome Places a Mile aſunder for the Waters to bed in; ſo did the Earl in making the new *Bedford* River and Receptacle. But this Practice *Van Weſterdyke*, who was ſent for to view the Fens, ſays, Sir *Cornelius* could give him no Reaſons for. And *Weſterdyke* farther ſays——"If the Banks from *Peterborow* by *Guyhirn* un-"to *Wisbech*, had been ſet only at a convenient Diſtance one from the other, "and one fair Cut made for the Waters to paſs in, much Money might there-"by have been ſaved, and the Work had been far better; which is to be doubt-"ed muſt yet be done at laſt; for Experience will ſhew, that *Waters kept toge-* "*ther in a Body paſs ſwiftly, and mend their Channel; but divided and diſperſed* "*paſs away very ſlowly, and in time loſe their Channel.*

The famous *Atkins* is of this Opinion: Speaking of the Cauſe of the then (1604.) Shallowneſs of *Ouſe* between *Erith* and *Harrimere*, he ſays, "*Willing-* "*ham* and *Over* Fens are unbank'd, which otherwiſe would force the Water to "grind a Channel.

Col. *Dodſon*, who writ a Piece for Draining †, (and was Director of the Corporation of Adventurers Works) ſaith, *p.* 7. "But I wiſh that thoſe Banks which are "upon *Bedford* River and *Mortons-leam*, had not been placed at ſo great Di-"ſtance one from another". And indeed many Arguments were printed againſt *Vermuyden*'s Scheme *, and againſt ſetting Banks of Rivers at a great Diſtance aſunder, about the time of the Undertaking for Draining: I ſhall enumerate a few out of a Piece written by *Edmund Scotten*, (in Anſwer to *Vermuyden*) who had been employ'd by the Earl of *Bedford*; publiſhed by Order of the Committee for the Fens, and preſented to the High-Court of Parliament ||, 1642. The Author, *p.* 24. ſaith, "I ſhall here, in ſhort, lay down ſome general Rules for "draining this great Level, in ſuch manner that although all cannot, yet the "greateſt Part of the Fens may be made Winter Grounds; wrong none, and "ſecure all; and the Charge not ſo great, but that they will abundantly requite "it.

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† This Piece is entitled, *The Deſign for the perfect Draining the Great Level of the Fens*, &c. And it is dedicated to the above-named *William* Earl of *Bedford*.

* Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*'s Diſcourſe touching the Draining the great Fens lying within the ſeveral Counties of *Lincoln*, *Northampton*, *Huntingdon*, *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, *Cambridge*, and the Iſle of *Ely*, &c. was order'd by the Committee for the great Level of the Fens to be printed, that all Men whom it concern'd, might thereby inform themſelves, and make their Exceptions againſt it, and likewiſe offer any other Deſign, and they ſhould have notice to he heard. This Order is ſigned

25. *Feb.* 1641. HEN. PELHAM.

|| This Piece is entitled, *A deſperate and dangerous Deſign diſcovered concerning the Fen Countries.*

Let

Edmund Scotten *his Scheme for Draining the Fens.*

" Let Rivers be made large and deep, and there will be Matter enough ari-
" ſing thereout with the Indykes to make high Banks near on each Side the Ri-
" vers: Theſe Banks being made high, and but a ſmall Diſtance between, will
" be a Shelter to the Water that ſhall run betwixt them, as a Hedge or Wall
" will ſhelter Cattle that lie near unto them; ſo that the Wind will have no
" Power to raiſe violent Waves againſt theſe Banks to tear them, as the others
" ſet at a great Diſtance: ſo that here is one main Miſchief prevented already.

" A Second Miſchief will be hereby prevented with a Benefit in the room:
" For whereas ſuch Banks (ſpeaking of *Vermuyden*'s) tho' placed at a great Di-
" ſtance, could be made to hold, they would reſtrain the Waters of their for-
" mer Liberty, and ſo cauſe them to riſe higher in the Meadows above than
" formerly, and ſo do much hurt; which large and deep Rivers will prevent.
" For as ſoon as the Flood begins to riſe in the Rivers above the Fens, it finds
" ſuch full and current Paſſage to Sea, that it is taken down as it begins to riſe,
" ſo as that which would have been a little Flood before will be no Flood now;
" and therefore in Summer-time will be much advantageous to their Meadows,
" cauſing their Graſs to be leſs floated than before.

" A Third Benefit by large and deep Rivers, with Banks placed near the
" Sides, is this: When a great Flood comes, it finds ſuch full and current Paſ-
" ſage, that it will be gone half into the Sea in ſuch time, as without ſuch Ri-
" vers it will be climbing up to get above the Superficies of the Fens between
" thoſe Banks ſo far diſtant: For until it be got aloft, it can go but ſlowly (as
" is confeſſed by Sir *Cornelius*) wanting the Fall it had before; and the Haſſocks,
" Reeds, Sedge, and long Graſs will hinder the Paſſage; and as ſoon as it is
" aloft, the Wind will have Power to raiſe violent Waves, which will whinder
" the Banks to pieces: For it muſt be high againſt thoſe Banks before the two
" Rivers will grind out a Paſſage; for it is four Miles between *Wisbech Horſe-
" ſhoe* and the Sea, as he, Sir *Cornelius*, ſaith it will, *p.* 25. But there is a ſtraiter
" Paſſage before it comes out of the Fens beſides that.

" Now is it not much better, that half a great Flood be ſent ſpeedily into
" the Sea, than to lye by the way tearing and rending the Banks?

" A Fourth Benefit is——A ſmall Flood or Riſe of Water being pent up be-
" tween Banks as aforeſaid, will go with Force down a deep River, and ſo ſcour
" and keep open the Outfall, when the other loſes a ſmall Flood by the way.

" It is moſt apparent by what hath been already ſaid (continues he) that when
" the Land-Floods ſhall deſcend from *Northampton*, *Bedford*, or other Upland
" Countries, and ſhall ariſe in height four or five Feet over the Superficies of
" the Meadows, they will ariſe ſix or ſeven Feet high between his Banks, tho'
" placed at a great Diſtance between them; and when the Waters are thus aloft
" near the Top of the Banks, the Wind will have ſuch Power to raiſe violent
" Waves againſt them that will break them and tear them to pieces.

From what has been ſaid, 'tis plain that *Weſterdyke*, *Atkins*, *Dodſon*, this Author, (with many others) were of Opinion, that *Vermuyden*, in ſetting the Banks ſo far aſunder, was in an Error: As indeed Experience has ſince fatally ſhewn. But this was not the only Miſtake he led the Adventurers into.

'Till now the ſeveral different Undertakers propos'd the ſure known Way of Draining, *viz. Imbanking Rivers*, and *Sluicing Drains*, as I have ſhewed. But Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*, as he ſays in his printed Scheme, *p.* 2. " took Advice
" of the experienced Men in the *Low-Countries*, (*improper Adviſers in this Caſe*)
" and did ſtudy from time to time how to contrive this Work for the beſt Ad-
" vantage. And the Effect of their Advice and his Study was—He ran counter to all the known Rules of Draining.

Scheme for Draining, publiſh'd A. D. 1629.

It is well obſerv'd in a Piece * printed in 1629. (*p.* 17.) " That
" the *Dutch* deſerve Commendation and Imitation for enlarging them-
" ſelves into the Sea, and ſecuring themſelves from the Sea by coſtly and
" ingenious Devices. But ſuch Devices are not proper for our Buſineſs, which
" is to be performed in a far different manner; the Error leading us directly to
" the Remedy, which is merely natural: For Nature hath given to all Rivers
" and Waters, as well their Courſes, Iſſues, and Outfalls into the Sea, as their

* This Piece is entitled, *A Diſcourſe concerning the Draining of the Fens and ſurrounded Grounds in the ſix Counties of* Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, *with the Iſle of* Ely, Huntingdon, Northampton, *and* Lincoln.

" Heads and Springs. *This Guidance of Nature, if we follow, and add Art as* " *an Aſſiſtant unto it*, we ſhall, by removing the Cauſe, avoid alſo the Effect; " and by conſidering how the Miſchief hath grown, learn to prevent it for the " future.

" The Water that annoyeth the Fens, do firſt fill the Rivers and Drains; at " whoſe Iſſues being returned back by Impediment, they overflow and ſtifle the " whole Body of the Fens: for which there is no poſſible Remedy, but the " opening and ſecuring the natural Outfalls; at which the whole Body of the " Fens will equally and ſpeedily unburthen it ſelf, and ſo return to that priſtine " Condition ſo much extoll'd in the Monuments of Antiquity.

Sir Corn. Vermuyden's *Obſervations about Draining.*

Sir *Cornelius* himſelf ſays, (*p.* 7.) " There is in Uſe a general Rule in " Draining and gaining of drowned Lands: Which is by *Imbanking all the Ri-* " *vers on each Side, and by leading away the Downfall by Drains and Sluices.* " And this is the ordinary Way of Draining, as is uſual in all ſuch Caſes.

But this general Rule muſt be diſpenſed with here, to ſave the Expence of Banks at firſt, and the Charge of yearly Repairs of them afterwards.

Sir *Cornelius* farther ſaith,——" A great Inconvenience would be on the " *South* Side of *Ouſe*; for by imbanking of the Rivers on that Side, there " would be three or four Levels, the one above the other, and all of them " would want Fall all the Winter-time. And to lead away the Downfall of " them, it muſt be carried by Tunnels underneath the three ſeveral Rivers of " *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Stoke*. And the Upper Level muſt of Neceſſity " commit the Waters thereof into the next, and ſo into the Lower; and this " Way the Water muſt go 28 Miles before it comes to the Fall; and how the " Downfall ſhould be brought ſuch a Length without ſurcharging the Drains " either in one or t'other Level, I know not. And eſpecially here being ſeve- " ral Brooks, the which in Winter-time will overtake the Downfall, and being " liberal with their Waters (being more than the Drains and Tunnels can ſwal- " low) the Level would become ſurrounded, and ſo without Perfection from " within.

None of the former Undertakers for Draining were of this Opinion; nor were at this time *Van Weſterdyke*, my Lord *Gorges*, &c. And I cannot conceive, that the *South* Level was in Condition irrelievable by the common Rules of Draining. For I find that when only *Brandon* and *Stoke* Rivers had their Outfall by *Lenne*, the Channel was large enough to paſs away the freſh Waters: And after *Great Ouſe* had its Courſe to *Lenne*, among innumerable Preſentments from the Middle Level, I find but two from the *South* Level, *viz.* one *September* 26. 1536.—" That the Hurt and Loſs by the freſh Waters in the Hundred of *Clack-* " *cloſe* is, for that *Stoke* River, the Gutters, Sewers, and Drains have not been " ſufficiently cleanſed and ſcoured, and kept according to the old Rule and Cu- " ſtom, *&c.*

The other, *July* 26. 1608. preſents, That from *Stoke-Bridge* for the moſt part to *Helgay-Bridge*, *Stoke* River is unfermed, and grown full of Weeds, to the great Hinderance of the Waters there; and from *Helgay-Bridge* to the *Ouſe* is likewiſe unfermed, and is very defective both in Breadth and Depth.

Here is no Complaint made of being totally ſurrounded, tho' this Level is the loweſt Part of all the Fens; (but more of this in Sect. 6.) And conſidering there was ten Feet Fall from the Soil of the Fens to Low-water Mark in the River at *Salters-lode*, it is evident there was too ſufficient Fall into *Ouſe* for all the Rivers of the *South* Level: And there muſt, as I conceive, have been Depth ſufficient from the Soil of each Level to Low-water Mark, eſpecially at Neip-Tides, for the Downfall; for the Low-water Mark up the River is much lower in Neip than in Spring-Tides; whereas down to Seaward the Low-water Mark of a Spring-Tide is lower than that of a Neip. So that had the Rivers been imbanked, there wanted only Drains of ſufficient Width and Depth ſluiced next the *Ouſe*, to drain the ſeveral Diviſions of this Level.

But Sir *Cornelius* ſaith, " As the Rivers of this Level fall croſs-wiſe into *Ouſe*, " theſe Lands cannot be made Winter Grounds by the ordinary Way of Drain- " ing, *&c.*

Sir Corn. Vermuyden *his Scheme for Draining*, &c.

" *Therefore the principal River, which is* Ouſe, *may not go down through the* " *Fens as now it does*; *but the beſt way is to turn that River at* Erith *into, and* " *next unto* Bedford *River*; *and to ſhut the Paſſage of* Ouſe, *as now it goeth by a*

" *croſs Bank through the River to the firm Land, and ſo force it into that Courſe* " *as now* Bedford *River goeth*; whereby all the Lands below *Erith* will be freed " from the Overflowing of *Ouſe*.

" And to the end that the Waters of *Ouſe* ſhall not annoy the Country any " farther, the ſaid *Bedford* River is to be imbanked on each Side thereof, to " keep *Ouſe* within certain Bounds; the Banks thereof muſt be a great Diſtance " the one from the other, ſo that the Water in time of Extremity may go in a " large room, to keep it from riſing too high; and the more, becauſe there is a " great Diſtance of about 25 Miles from *Erith* before it cometh to the perfect " Fall. This was Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*'s Scheme.

In 1650, *John Bavents Weſterdyke* being importuned by ſome Friends to come into *England* to ſee the *Great Level of the Fens*, and to give his Judgment concerning the Draining thereof, came accordingly: And having ſufficiently viewed the ſame, and all the Rivers that paſs through it, from their coming into the Fens to their Outfalls, gave his Opinion as followeth.

John Bavents Weſterdyke *his Scheme for Draining the Fens.*

" *That the unreſtrained Overflowings of the Rivers was the principal Cauſe of* " *the ſurrounding of this Level:* And this being apparently the Diſeaſe, there- " fore *the confining of theſe Rivers within ſufficient Banks muſt conſequently in rea-* " *ſon be the Cure: And Drains muſt be made for the Downfal Waters, and they* " *muſt have Sluices at their Outfalls.*

" *If* Ouſe, continues he, *had been confin'd to its old Channel by ſtrait Banks*, it " had been a far better and cheaper Work; and that Cut of *Bedford* River would " have been of ſingular Uſe, as a *Capital* both for Draining and Watering all " that Part of the Level; and it is a diſputable Queſtion, notwithſtanding all " the Charges beſtowed on the Banks of that River, whether it be not yet the " *beſt Courſe to deſert it, and do the other Work.*

For, ſaith he —— " Theſe Sluices being ſet near *Salters-lode*, it will be impoſ- " ſible *without Banks to preſerve the Lands above* Ely *from drowning*; for they " have ſo little Fall, and lye ſo far from the Outfall, that before the Water can " in any conſiderable Meaſure ſhrink there, by reaſon of the Ebb at *Salters-lode*, " another Flood will come again, and ſhut the Sluice-Doors.

" And if *Imbanking the Rivers muſt be the laſt and undoubted Way of Drain-* " *ing*, why ſhould ſo much Money be ſpent in the fruitleſs way of Sluicing Ri- " vers now, as formerly they did at *Wisbech*, which is now totally deſerted as " uſeleſs.

" *To ſet Sluices upon Rivers*, continues *Weſterdyke*, *is againſt the general Rules* " *of Draining*; and I punctually aver, *the intended Work is impoſſible to be done* " *by Sluices.*

This is the Opinion *Weſterdyke* gave to the Lords and others Participants in the ſaid Level *. One of them was my Lord *Gorges*, who had been concerned in this Undertaking from the firſt of it, and knew the Level beſt of any of them. *His Lordſhip declared in writing, that it was ever his Opinion, that the better Way of draining this* South *Level, (for whoſe Benefit alone the Sluices were intended) is by Banks without any Sluices at all at* Denver, according to the certain Rules of Draining, which is to *imbank all Rivers and Brook Waters; and never to put Sluices upon ſuch Waters as have a continual Body to preſerve their Channels or Outfalls from ſilting up by Tides.*

The Opinion of L. Gorges, *Surveyor-Gen. of the Fens, concerning Draining.*

There were alſo ſeveral Pieces printed about this time againſt Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*'s Scheme by the Inhabitants of the Fens. One writ by a Servant of the then Earl of *Bedford*, in his Dedication to the Earl ſays—" Whether theſe " my Endeavours may here prove acceptable or no, I know not; yet however I " have declared my Opinion, and left it extant, that future Times may witneſs " that the Danger was diſcovered. *For my own part, I am confident that if this* " *Deſign be purſued, what I have now written (that they muſt in time deſert the* " *Works) one Day, by coſtly Experience, will be found to be true.*

Theſe forementioned Authors and great Artiſts gave their Opinion of the Prejudice this Scheme would be of to Draining only, that being their proper Province.

Vermuyden's *Scheme prejudicial to Draining.*

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* This is a Manuſcript, entitled, *A Brief of the Obſervations and Advice of* John Bavents Weſterdyke *concerning the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens, preſented to the Lords and others Participants in that Level,* Sept. 13. 1650.

Others

Others there were who writ againſt it, to prove that it would be deſtructive of Navigation too. For Brevity's Sake I'll only tranſcribe from a Manuſcript, called, *An Anſwer to Sir* Cornelius Vermuyden's *Project. Demonſtrative Reaſons why the Draining of the great Level, as intended by Sir* Cornelius Vermuyden *and Mr.* Andrew Burwell, *will be deſtructive to the Port and Haven of* King's-Lyn, *and to the Navigation up the Rivers* Ouſe *and* Grant *to and from* Cambridge.

Vermuyden's Scheme prejudicial to Navigation.

" By the printed Project of Sir *Cornelius* it is apparent, that by ſtopping the " River *Ouſe* at *Erith*, and carrying *Bedford* Water out at *Salters-lode*, which " anciently, and now runneth by *Harrimere*, and there meets with the River " *Grant* (both which heighten the Water over the Hards about *Ely*) will hin- " der the Navigation to *Cambridge*, by reaſon of the little or no Water which " will cover the ſaid Hards.

" By taking away of the Waters of the River of *Ouſe*, by the Stop at *Erith*, " and none but *Grant* Water left to carry Goods to *Cambridge*, the Navigation " to *Cambridge* all Summer-time will quite be overthrown *, *&c.*

" By Mr. *Andrew Burwell*'s printed Project to ſet a Saſs over *Ouſe* at *Magda- len* Fall, is to take away the Receptacle of a wide and deep River, which " runneth about 40 Miles above *Magdalen* toward *Cambridge*, whereby the Silt " brought up by the Tide into the Channel cannot be carried back to Sea, and " ſo the Channel will be utterly deſtroy'd †, as appeareth plainly by theſe Ob- " ſervations.

" 1. There waxeth little or no Water at *Lyn* Town, until it runneth over all " the Sands beneath *Lyn*, which are three or four Miles broad; and in four " Hours it filleth the River up to *Harrimere*, which is from the Sea between fifty " and ſixty Miles.

" 2. Before this River is full up to *Harrimere*, the Sands on both Sides the " Channel beneath *Lyn* are bare, by reaſon the Water falleth three Hours upon " the Sands before it falleth any thing at *Prieſts-houſes*.

" 3. So that whereas now the River from *Magdalen* to *Harrimere* being full, " and the Sands on both Sides the Channel bare beneath *Lyn*, the Waters go " back to Sea in three or four Acres Breadth, where they came in in three or " four Miles Breadth; and are eight Hours running out, and but four Hours run- " ing in: So by the Straitneſs of the Channel, and the long time of running " out, the Silt is carried back to Sea, and the Navigation and Channel by God's " Providence preſerved.

" 4. Whereas it followeth neceſſarily, that by taking away the Receptacle, " and the great Weight of Water contain'd; not only the Port and Haven, but " the Navigation up the River *Ouſe*, (which brancheth into twelve Counties, " receiving thereby the Benefit of Exportation and Importation of Goods) will " be utterly deſtroy'd.

A. D. 1650. *The Participants Works for Draining the Fens.*

Thus it appears, that different Authors did at that time prove, that the Sluicing the River *Ouſe*, and the executing *Vermuyden*'s Project, would be deſtructive of Navigation and Draining. And yet the Undertakers for Draining the Fens did execute that Scheme, and Sluices were by them decreed to be made near *Salters-lode* croſs the River *Ouſe*, beneath the Mouths of *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall*, and *Grant* Rivers, to ſtop the Tidal Flood from putting into any of them: And alſo the new *Bedford* River was decreed to be digged from *Salters-lode* to *Erith*, in Length 21 Miles; and Sluices were alſo by the ſaid Corporation decreed to be ſet down croſs the old Channel of *Ouſe* at the *Hermitage* near *Erith*, to turn the Waters out of their ancient Courſe down the ſaid new *Bedford* River, according to Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden* his Project.

N. B. I can't help obſerving, that the Expence of executing this artificial Scheme was calculated at but 8000 *l.* leſs than the Charge would have been of imbanking the natural Rivers, and following the known ſure Rules of Draining; and there was ſo great a Diviſion amongſt the Adventurers which Method to fol-

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* This prov'd true; for after a Stop at *Erith* was made, they were forc'd to make navigable Sluices in *Grant* River to hold up Water; otherwiſe there could have been no Navigation in that River to *Cambridge*.

† This has fatally prov'd true, for now the Channel is deſtroy'd.

low,

low, that the Majority for Sluicing the River *Ouſe* was but one Vote; and that Majority was occaſion'd by the private Intereſt of——who had ſome Lands in the *South* Level.

Cambridge *and* Lyn *petition againſt thoſe Works: but without Effect.*

As ſoon as the Corporations of the Univerſity and Town of *Cambridge*, and of *King's-Lyn*, had Knowledge of this Decree of the Adventurers to erect Sluices croſs the great River *Ouſe*, they being apprehenſive that ſuch Sluices would utterly deſtroy Navigation, they petitioned the Commiſſioners that were appointed by the Act in 1649, to judge between the Country and the Adventurers, in the moſt moving Terms againſt ſuch Sluices being built.

Yet notwithſtanding theſe Petitions againſt thoſe Sluices foretold the Miſchiefs that would enſue—Notwithſtanding the ſetting down Sluices, or other Obſtructions, in navigable Streams, is contrary to *Magna Charta* ||, and againſt ten or more Statutes of this Realm not repealed or diſpenced with——Notwithſtanding the ſetting Sluices croſs Rivers, was own'd by *Vermuyden* to be againſt the Rules of Draining, which are, ſays he, to imbank all Rivers.——Notwithſtanding *Weſterdyke* and other great Artiſts averr'd, (to the Adventurers) it was impoſſible to drain the Fens by Sluices, and declar'd in writing, that they would be forc'd to deſert ſuch artificial Works, and muſt at laſt imbank the natural Rivers.—— Notwithſtanding the Lord *Gorges*, Surveyor-General of the Adventurers Works, alſo declar'd againſt building ſuch Sluices.——Notwithſtanding the Adventurers had 95,000 Acres, a full third Part of the Fens, allowed them and their Heirs for ever, to enable them to drain the whole by Imbankments.——Notwithſtanding the Act the Adventurers obtain'd in 1649. directed, that the "*Fens ſhould be* "*drained and imbanked without Prejudice to Navigation*": Notwithſtanding all theſe Reſtraints, Remonſtrances and Reaſons to the contrary, yet in Oppoſition to the Laws of their Country—to the Rules of Draining—to their own Act of Parliament, they did build Sluices croſs the River of *Great Ouſe*, at *Erith*, and at *Denver Hith*. * * * * * * * *

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The Conſequence of which Works to Navigation and Draining, is the Subject-Matter of the next Section.

|| In the Appendix is an Abſtract of ſuch Statutes, as have been made for the avoiding all Annoyances and Obſtructions in navigable Rivers.

SECT. V.

Of Denver *Sluices being erected by the Adventurers croſs the River of* Great Ouſe *near* Salters-lode, *beneath the Mouths of all the Navigable Rivers that have their Courſe through the* South Level, *and thereby ſtopping the Tidal Flood out of its ancient Receptacles. The Petition of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *againſt thoſe Sluices being built - - - Of the making the Hundred-foot Drain,* alias, *New* Bedford *River, and building Sluices croſs the* Ouſe *at the* Hermitage *near* Erith, *and thereby turning the Waters of* Ouſe *out of their natural and deep Channel down that ſhallow Drain - - - Of the ruinous Effects of theſe Works to Navigation - - - And of the many Attempts of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *toward a Relief.*

A. D. 1650. THE Corporation of *Lenne* hearing of the Decree of the Corporation of Adventurers to erect a Sluice croſs the *Ouſe* near *Salters-lode*, Mr. *Robinſon* and Mr. *Green*, Aldermen, were deſir'd to ride to *Salters-lode*, to learn what Works the Undertakers for Draining the Fens intended, which might be prejudicial to Navigation.

LenRegis } *Congregatio ibidem tent' viceſimo quarto die Martij*, 1650. *Bartho.Wormell*, Mayor.
Guihalda }

This Day Mr. *Robinſon* and Mr. *Green*, Aldermen, made Report of their Journey to *Salters-lode*.—At their coming thither, they found that the Undertakers for Draining of the great Level (according to the Act 29. *May*, 1649.) intended to ſet a Sluice on the River of *Ouſe*; which they conceived to be much to the Prejudice of the Navigation of this Town.

Whereupon for the Prevention thereof, a Petition was drawn and preſented by Mr. *Bartholomew Wormell*, Mayor, and Mr. *Robinſon*, Alderman, to the Commiſſioners ſitting at *Wisbech* the 24th Day of *March*.—A Copy whereof here followeth, as it is enter'd in the Hall-Book * at *Lenne*.

To the Honourable *William Lenthall*, Eſq; Speaker of the Parliament; to the Lord Commiſſioner and Keeper of the Great Seal; the Judges of the *Bench* and *Common-Pleas*, and Barons of the Court of *Exchequer*; *William* Earl of *Salisbury*, and the reſt of the Gentlemen that are Commiſſioners for the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens, as by Act of Parliament the 29th of *May*, 1649.

The Humble Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Council of the Town of *Lenne* in *Norfolk*,

Sheweth,

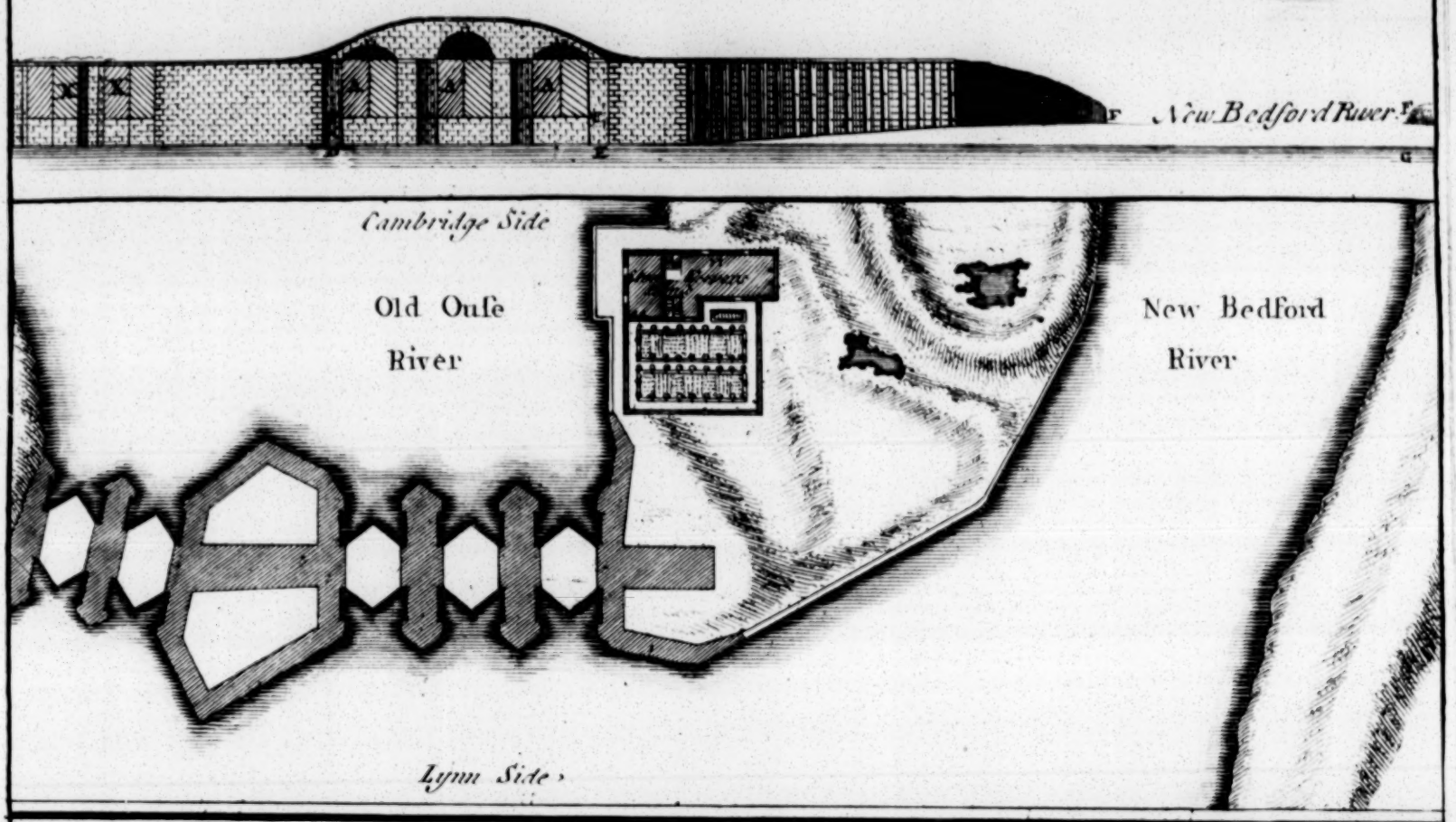
Petition of Lyn *againſt building* Denver *Sluices.*

" THAT *the Town of* Lenne *hath been, and is a very ancient Port Town, and*
" *the Inhabitants there have no other Livelihood but by Navigation; and*
" *whereas they were informed, that the Earl of* Bedford *and his Participants have*
" *reſolved to ſet Sluices over the River* Ouſe *by* Denver, *or thereabouts; will ut-*
" *terly deſtroy Navigation at* Lenne, *and into ſeven or eight Counties unto which*
" *the River of* Ouſe *branches it ſelf: For it muſt be taken for granted, that the*
" *Flood cannot flow higher up the River than the Sluices; whereas now it flows up*
" *to* Harrimer, *which is twenty Miles above the Sluices, and there it waxeth two*
" *Foot Water every Spring-Tide; and the River of* Ouſe *being filled with the Flood*
" *twice every* 24 *Hours, comes down with ſuch a Force, having the Weight of the*
" *Freſhes upon the Flood, that it ſcours not only the River of* Ouſe, *but* Lenne-
" haven *ten Miles to Seaward from* Lenne; *ſo that by that means our Haven and*
" *Rivers are very navigable: And if the Flood-Tide be not ſuffered to flow as high*
" *as formerly it hath done, doubtleſs our Navigation from* Lenne *to Sea, and from*
Lenne

* This Book has been allow'd in Evidence at *Norfolk* Aſſizes before Lord Chief Juſtice *Hales*.

The Upright & Plan *of* DENVER SLUICES *Built by y^e* Corporation *of* Adventurers *cross the* Ouse A.D. 1651

Fig. 1.



The Upright & Plan *of the* Ruin *of* DENVER SLUCES *as it remains since y^e* Tides *blew them up* A.D. 1713

Fig. 2.

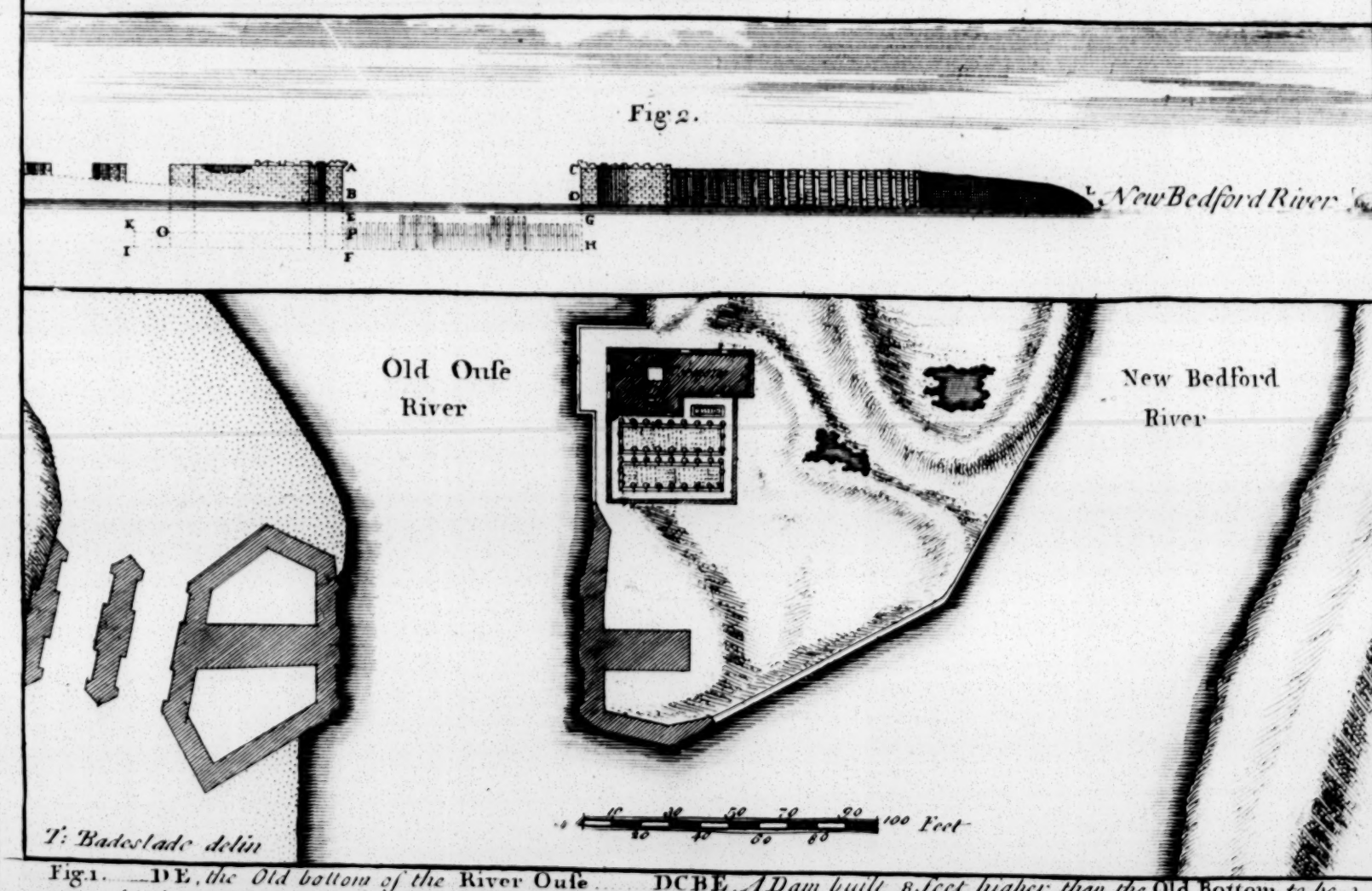


Fig. 1. DE, *the Old bottom of the* River Ouse ... DCBE, *A Dam built 8 feet higher than the* Old Bottom *to be upon a level with* EF, *the bottom of* New Bedford River *which* River *was made by the* Adventurers; *and digged but 5 feet deep, and 100 feet wide, whereas* Old Ouse *was 14 feet deep and 200 feet wide* ... A. A. A. *the* Floodgates, *each but 18 feet wide, so that* Old Ouse *was reduced to 54 feet water way* ... *the* Sluces XX *were added since.*

Fig. 2 ... I.F.H. *the ancient width of* Ouse ... A.B.C.D. *the present width* ... O.P, *low water mark before the* Sluices *were Built, 10 feet lower than the Surface of the* Fenns ... BD, *low water mark now near two feet above the Surface* ... F.E.G.H, *the 8 foot* Damm *remaining in the* River Ouse, *since* Denver Sluices *were Blown up by the* Tides.

Section 3. or 7.

SECT. V.

Of Denver *Sluices being erected by the Adventurers croſs the River of* Great Ouſe *near* Salters-lode, *beneath the Mouths of all the Navigable Rivers that have their Courſe through the* South *Level, and thereby ſtopping the Tidal Flood out of its ancient Receptacles. The Petition of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *againſt thoſe Sluices being built - - - Of the making the Hundred-foot Drain,* alias, *New* Bedford *River, and building Sluices croſs the* Ouſe *at the* Hermitage *near* Erith, *and thereby turning the Waters of* Ouſe *out of their natural and deep Channel down that ſhallow Drain - - - Of the ruinous Effects of theſe Works to Navigation - - - And of the many Attempts of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *toward a Relief.*

A. D. 1650. THE Corporation of *Lenne* hearing of the Decree of the Corporation of Adventurers to erect a Sluice croſs the *Ouſe* near *Salters-lode*, Mr. *Robinſon* and Mr. *Green*, Aldermen, were deſir'd to ride to *Salters-lode*, to learn what Works the Undertakers for Draining the Fens intended, which might be prejudicial to Navigation.

LenRegis } *Congregatio ibidem tent' viceſimo quarto die Martij*, 1650. *Bartho.Wormell*, Mayor.
Guihalda }

This Day Mr. *Robinſon* and Mr. *Green*, Aldermen, made Report of their Journey to *Salters-lode*.—At their coming thither, they found that the Undertakers for Draining of the great Level (according to the Act 29. *May*, 1649.) intended to ſet a Sluice on the River of *Ouſe*; which they conceived to be much to the Prejudice of the Navigation of this Town.

Whereupon for the Prevention thereof, a Petition was drawn and preſented by Mr. *Bartholomew Wormell*, Mayor, and Mr. *Robinſon*, Alderman, to the Commiſſioners ſitting at *Wisbech* the 24th Day of *March*.—A Copy whereof here followeth, as it is enter'd in the Hall-Book * at *Lenne*.

To the Honourable *William Lenthall*, Eſq; Speaker of the Parliament; to the Lord Commiſſioner and Keeper of the Great Seal; the Judges of the *Bench* and *Common-Pleas*, and Barons of the Court of *Exchequer*; *William* Earl of *Salisbury*, and the reſt of the Gentlemen that are Commiſſioners for the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens, as by Act of Parliament the 29th of *May*, 1649.

The Humble Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Council of the Town of *Lenne* in *Norfolk*,

Sheweth,

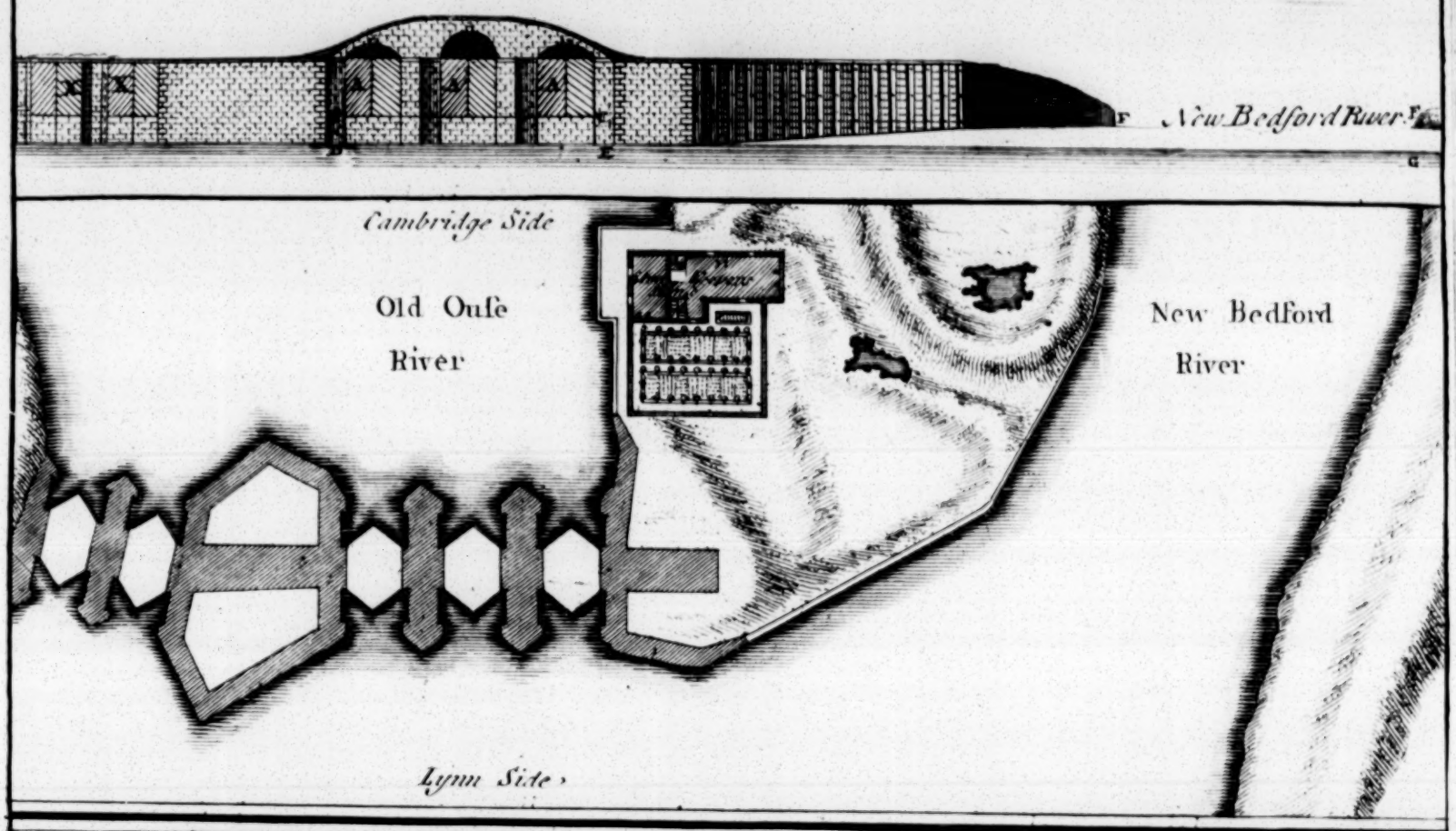
Petition of Lyn *againſt building* Denver *Sluices.*

" *THAT the Town of* Lenne *hath been, and is a very ancient Port Town, and* " *the Inhabitants there have no other Livelihood but by Navigation; and* " *whereas they were informed, that the Earl of* Bedford *and his Participants have* " *reſolved to ſet Sluices over the River* Ouſe *by* Denver, *or thereabouts; will ut-* " *terly deſtroy Navigation at* Lenne, *and into ſeven or eight Counties unto which* " *the River of* Ouſe *branches it ſelf: For it muſt be taken for granted, that the* " *Flood cannot flow higher up the River than the Sluices; whereas now it flows up* " *to* Harrimer, *which is twenty Miles above the Sluices, and there it waxeth two* " *Foot Water every Spring-Tide; and the River of* Ouſe *being filled with the Flood* " *twice every 24 Hours, comes down with ſuch a Force, having the Weight of the* " *Freſhes upon the Flood, that it ſcours not only the River of* Ouſe, *but* Lenne- " haven *ten Miles to Seaward from* Lenne; *ſo that by that means our Haven and* " *Rivers are very navigable: And if the Flood-Tide be not ſuffered to flow as high* " *as formerly it hath done, doubtleſs our Navigation from* Lenne *to Sea, and from* Lenne

* This Book has been allow'd in Evidence at *Norfolk* Aſſizes before Lord Chief Juſtice *Hales*.

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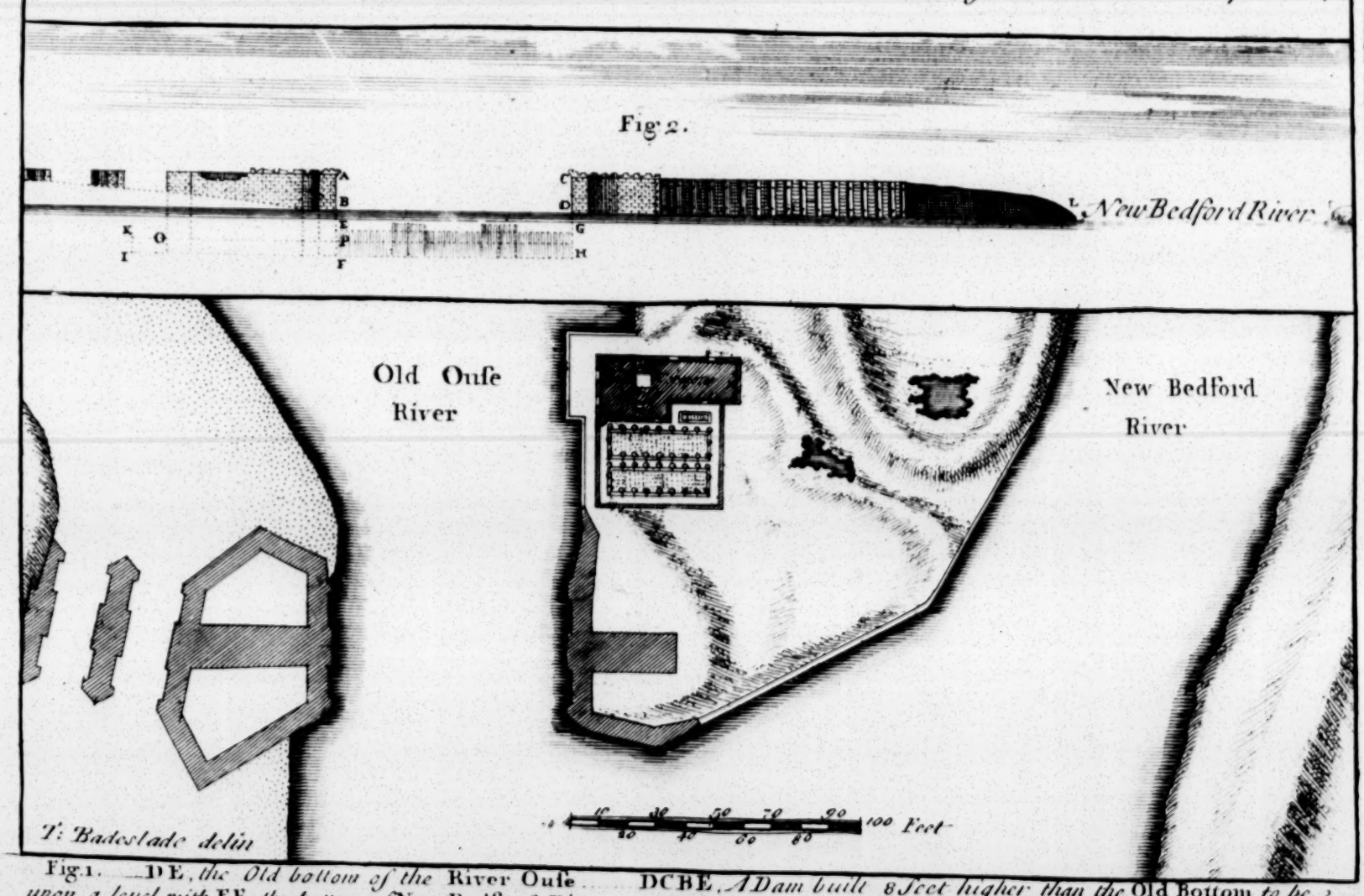


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Fig. 2 ... I F H. *the ancient width of* Ouse ... A B C D. *the present width* ... O P, *low water mark before the* Sluices *were Built, 10 feet lower than the Surface of the* Fens ... BD. *low water mark now near two feet above the Surface* ... F E G H. *the 8 foot* Damm *remaining in the* River Ouse, *since* Denver Sluices *were Blown up by the* Tides.

Section 3. or 7.

" Lenne *to* Cambridge, *and to other Countries, will be utterly loſt, and of no Uſe*
" *at all; ſo that it will not only be the Ruin of your Petitioners, but the undoing*
" *of many in ſeveral Countries.*

They moſt humbly pray, that there may be no Sluices ſet upon the River of Ouſe *to hinder Navigation. And they ſhall ever pray.*

Alſo this Day Mr. *Mayor* and Mr. *Robinſon* reported the Anſwer of the above-ſaid Commiſſioners to the ſaid Petition, which was to this Effect:

That nothing ſhould be done to the Prejudice of Navigation of Lenne, *and* Cambridge; *and that if the ſaid Sluices were to the Prejudice of Navigation, they ſhould be pulled up again.*

A Petition was alſo delivered from both the Corporations of the Town and Univerſity of *Cambridge*, as followeth:

A Copy of a Petition delivered by Thomas Buck, *on the Behalf of the Univerſity and Town of* Cambridge, *unto the Lords and others Commiſſioners for Draining the Great Level of the Fens, at their Meeting and Seſſion at* Peterburgh, *upon the 24th Day of* March, Ann. 1650.

To the Right Honourable the Lords, and other the Commiſſioners for the Draining the Great Level of the Fens. The Humble Petition of the Vicechancellor and Heads of Colleges in the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, together with the Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of *Cambridge*,

Sheweth,

Petition of Cambridge *againſt building* Denver *Sluices.*

" *THAT whereas by an Act for the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens,*
" *bearing Date the 29th of* May, 1649. *it is ordered, That the ſaid Work,*
" *ſo much tending to the publick Good, may proceed and be proſecuted with Juſtice,*
" *Equity, and Effect; and whereas it is in the ſame Act in ſpecial provided, that*
" *the ſaid Work be done without Prejudice to the Navigation in certain Rivers*
" *therein named, whereof the Rivers of* Grant *and* Ouſe *are two, principally con-*
" *ſider'd: Your Petitioners being informed by the Works already begun, and intended*
" *to be proſecuted, the Navigation in the ſaid two Rivers, as to the Conveyance*
" *from* Cambridge *to the Town of* Lenne, *and from* Lenne *thither, will be there-*
" *by either wholly taken away, or very much obſtructed; in regard the ſaid River*
" *of* Ouſe, *which by its joining it ſelf with the River of* Grant, *doth many ways*
" *maintain the ſaid Navigation, will be altogether, or in great Part, diverted to*
" *another Courſe; as likewiſe the Navigation between the Town of* Cambridge
" *and the Town of* St. Ives, Huntingdon, *and divers others by the River of* Ouſe,
" *will be greatly interrupted; whereby not only the ſaid Univerſity and Town of*
" Cambridge *will be wholly undone, and all the adjacent Countries greatly damni-*
" *fied and impoveriſh'd, but alſo a great Prejudice will thereby befal to a great Part*
" *of this whole Nation, by the Stoppage of the general Commerce at* Sturbridge-
" Fair.

" *Your Petitioners therefore holding themſelves bound by their utmoſt Endeavours*
" *to keep off ſo great a Miſchief and Ruin, and ſo far as in them lieth to acquit*
" *themſelves unto Poſterity that they have diſcharged their Duty herein, do humbly*
" *beſeech your Honours to take the Premiſes into your ſerious and timely Conſidera-*
" *tion, and to take ſuch Order, that ſufficient Security may be given, and ſuch Pro-*
" *viſion made, that we and our Succeſſors may have Cauſe to bleſs your Care and*
" *Juſtice, and to pray for all Advancement to the Work.*

And your Petitioners ſhall, *&c.*

Benj. Whichcot, *Procan.*
Will. Bryan, *Mayor.*

A COPY of an Order then made by the ſaid Commiſſioners upon their ſerious Conſideration of the ſaid Petition.

" *Upon ſerious Conſideration thereof the Commiſſioners do declare, That the Un-*
" *dertakers are to take ſpecial Care of Navigation at their Peril, the Act of Par-*

" *liament having ſo provided for the Preſervation of the ſame. And in caſe the*
" *ſaid Undertakers ſhould miſcarry therein, the Commiſſioners will then proceed to*
" *give Satisfaction according to the Powers given by the ſaid Act, anſwerable to*
" *the Damage the ſaid Univerſity and Town ſhall receive thereby.*
And the Adventurers gave Security, that they would not prejudice Navigation.

Having theſe Aſſurances given by Commiſſioners, appointed by Act of Parliament to be Judges between the Undertakers and the Country, *&c.* and having Security from the Undertakers, the Corporations of *Lenne* and of the Univerſity and Town of *Cambridge* could not avoid ſubmitting, tho' fearing the Conſequence they with Impatience waited the Event.

Denver *Sluices built* 165⅞. And the Undertakers for the General Draining of the Fens proceeded to erect Sluices (*for ſecuring of the* South *Level*, ſaith Sir *William Dugdale*) upon the River of *Great Ouſe*, near *Salters-lode*, beneath the Mouths of all the navigable Rivers that have their Courſe thro' that Diviſion of the Fens, viz. *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Stoke*, that fell into *Ouſe*: Whereby the Paſſage of the Tide into all the ſaid Rivers, which were wont to be filled twice in every 24 Hours, was wholly kept out for at leaſt 26 Miles of their uſual Flow.

Lenne was ſo apprehenſive of Danger to their Navigation from theſe Sluices, that while they were building, ſome of the Aldermen and Common-Council were deſired by the Hall to go to *Salters-lode*, to view what Works the Undertakers for Draining the Fens had made, or intended to make, which might be
1651. prejudicial to Navigation; and Letters were order'd, *Octob.* 31. 1651. to be writ
31. *Octob.* to the Mayor and Vicechancellor of *Cambridge*, and to the Mayor of *Huntingdon*, for a Meeting to conſider what Prejudice may ariſe to the Navigation, that ſo Proceedings may be had accordingly to preſerve the ſame.

Lenne Regis Guildhall, 25. Feb. 1652. At the Congregation there holden on *Friday* the 25th of *Feb.* 1652. it is order'd, That five Aldermen and ſix Common-Council-Men, or any three or more of them, be a Committee to conſider of the Letter and Petition of the Town of *Cambridge* concerning the Draining of the Fens, and the Damage that may thereby accrue to *Lenne* and *Cambridge*. And to call ſuch Ship-maſters, Keelmen, and others before them, as they ſhall ſee Cauſe, in order to the framing a Petition to the Parliament, if there ſhall be Cauſe.

Hence (and from many more Particulars I could enumerate) it is plain, that *Lenne* and *Cambridge* oppoſed all they lawfully could the Dam and Sluices croſs the *Ouſe*, which they were ſo very apprehenſive would highly affect and prejudice their Navigation.

And that this Dam or Sluice near *Salters-lode*, which ſhut the Tide out of its ancient Receptacles; together with another Dam croſs the *Ouſe* at the *Hermitage* near *Erith*, which turned that River from *Erith* down a new ſhallow Cut, called *Bedford* River, or *Hundred-foot Drain*, to *Salters-lode*, many Miles out of his ancient Channel, (ſee the Map of *Bedford* Level) was really and immediately prejudicial to Navigation, is but too eaſily proved. For

Hermitage *Sluice prejudicial to Navigation.* Before the Sluice at the *Hermitage* was made, great and conſtant Commerce and Trading was held between *Cambridge* and *St. Ives*, *Huntingdon*, *St. Neot*, *Bedford*, and Places adjacent; but immediately after erecting that Sluice, which turned the Waters of *Ouſe* down the Hundred-foot Drain, the River from *Harrimer* to *Erith*, which is about eleven Miles, was laid dry, by which all Navigation and Trade by Water between *Cambridge* and *Huntingdon*, &c. was and is intercepted and turned at leaſt thirty Miles about.

In all the Rivers, *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Stoke*, the Waters were ſo ſcanted by reaſon the Tides were ſtopp'd by *Denver* Dam and Sluice near *Salters-*

Denver *Sluice prejudicial to Navigation.* *lode*, and hindred from putting up into thoſe Rivers; (ſee the Plan of *Denver* Sluice) and by reaſon the *Bedford* Waters were ſtopp'd out of their old Channel at *Erith*, that the Navigation was, and is much more difficult than formerly, and more chargeable, and in many Places they could not ſail at all (where formerly they could) for want of Water.

This the Petitions and Allegations particularly of *Brandon* and *Thetford* witneſs.

To

To the Right Honourable the Lords and other the Commiſſioners for the regulating of Matters touching the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens.

The humble Petition of the Owners, Commoners, and Inhabitants of the Town of *Brandon*, alias *Brandon-Ferry* in the County of *Norfolk*,

Humbly ſheweth,

Navigation of Brandon *prejudiced by the Undertakers Works.*

" THAT, &c. (after Complaints about their Fens being taken from them) *and* " *your Petitioners alſo ſhew unto your Honours, by reaſon of ſome Stops* " *made by the Adventurers of the Tides, which till of late did freely flow* " *within few Miles of the ſaid Town; or by reaſon of ſome other Works of the* " *Adventurers, the Navigation to the ſaid Town, which heretofore, till very late-* " *ly, hath been of great Benefit and Advantage to the ſaid Town of* Brandon *and* " *Parts adjacent, and by which many Families in the ſaid Town have their only* " *Livelihood and Subſiſtance, is now become almoſt quite uſeleſs.*

May it therefore, *&c.*

" The 9th Article of the Allegations of the Inhabitants of the Town of *Bran-* " *don* ſaith, Their Method of Draining is a great Hindrance to us (being a Water- " Town, and many Families having their only Livelihood by the Water Trade) in " reſpect of Navigation; for thoſe Keels which formerly came up to *Brandon-Bridge* " laden with twenty Chaldrons of Coals, are now forced, to their great Trouble, " Charge, Loſs of Time, and other Damages, to empty their Coals many Miles " off out of their Veſſels, and bring them up in Lighters.

Therefore, *&c.*

To the ſame Effect are the following Affidavits:

Borough of Thetford } *ſſ.*

" EDmond *Ruſſel* of the Borough of *Thetford*, in the County of " *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, Gent. aged 77 Years, or thereabout, " maketh Oath——That he, this Deponent, hath lived with- " in the Borough aforeſaid ever ſince he was born: And that it " is about 60 Years ſince he uſed firſt to go down to *Lyn*, as a Waterman in his " Father's Boats; and that he himſelf hath uſed the Trade of a Waterman and " Merchant for about 45 Years: And that he, this Deponent, does remember " the Building of *Denver* Sluice; and that before the ſaid Sluice was built, he, " this Deponent, did remember that the Tide did ſwell as far as *Ebilton-lode*, " being within eight Miles of the aforeſaid Borough of *Thetford*, by reaſon " whereof the Waters did ſwell ſo much at the aforeſaid Borough, that he, this " Deponent, hath had his Barges, as alſo known other Mens Barges with about " ten Chaldron of Coals in them, come up to the *Chriſtopher*'s Bridge ſo called, " being a Bridge within the Borough aforeſaid. And this Deponent farther ſaith, " That by reaſon of the building of the ſaid Sluice at *Denver*, it hath ſo ſtopped " the Tide, that our River is ſo low with Water, that we cannot now come up " to Town with above two or three Chaldron of Coals at the moſt, in a Lighter, " when the Water is higheſt by reaſon of Floods; and with much leſs when the " Water is low by reaſon of Draught. And farther he ſaith not.

" *Francis Ruderham*, of the aforeſaid Borough of *Thetford*, aged 66, and has " lived there ever ſince he was born, made Affidavit to the ſame Effect——ſay- " ing, he remembred Barges come up to *Chriſtophers-Bridge* aforeſaid, loaden " with 14 or 15 Chaldron of Coals, before *Denver* Sluice was erected; but ſince, " except in great Floods, with not above two or three.

JONAH BROWNING, *Mayor.*

Such Complaints there were made againſt theſe Works, on account of their prejudicing Navigation, immediately after they were erected. But notwithſtanding theſe and many more Petitions and Remonſtrances made to the Commiſſioners aforeſaid, at their Sitting at *Peterborough* and *Ely*, as well from Fenmen as Waterimen, and as well from the Inland Towns as the Navigable Towns; yet however theſe Works being done, and done by Colour, or Pretence at leaſt of an Act of Parliament, the ſaid Petitioners were not relieved by the Commiſſioners. And the ſaid Commiſſioners did at *Ely*, in *March* 1653. adjudge the Fens drained, tho' the Country objected that it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon, and not the Undertakers Works, that had drained the Fens, and ſo deſired a reſpite of the Adjudication, but could not obtain it; the Undertakers pretending their Works had done it. But when at the ſame time the Prejudices to Navigation were urged, then it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon had occaſion'd them, and not their Works; and ſo the Adventurers made Advantage of Providence, both in the good and bad Effects of that dry Seaſon: But certainly, if notwithſtanding the Drought, the Trial was then thought competent enough to adjudicate the Fens drained by them; by as much Reaſon, the Trial was as competent to have adjudged by whom the Prejudices complain'd of were done to Navigation; for in the greateſt Droughts within any Man's Remembrance, when the Fens were as dry as they were at the Adjudication, yet the like Prejudices to Navigation were never known, as ſince the Undertakers Works.

The Fens adjudged drained.

Theſe Prejudices increaſing, and no Relief being to be obtain'd from the Commiſſioners appointed by the Act 1649. for regulating Matters relating to the Fens, the Univerſity and Town of *Cambridge* exhibited the following Petition.

To the Supreme Authority of the Nation, the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *England*.

The humble Petition of both the Corporations of the Univerſity and Town of *Cambridge*,

Sheweth,

Navigation of Cambridge *prejudiced by the Undertakers Works.*

" *THAT whereas by an Act of Parliament of the* 29*th of* May, 1649. *(entitled,* " An Act for the Draining the Great Level of the Fens) *it is enacted and* " *ordained, That* William *Earl of* Bedford, *and his Participants and Adventu-* " *rers, his and their Heirs and Aſſigns ſhall, at or before the* 20*th of* October, " *which ſhall be in the Year of our Lord* 1656. *cauſe the ſame to be drained and* " *imbanked without Prejudice to the Navigation in the Rivers of* Welland, Nene, " Grant, Ouſe, Brandon, Mildenhall, *and* Stoke, *or the Parts adjacent; where-* " *of the Undertakers ſo appointed and declared, have divers times promiſed your* " *Petitioners to have ſpecial Care, and aſſured them that their whole Undertaking* " *was engaged for it. Yet (may it pleaſe your Honours) ſo it is, that by their* " *Works, Sluices, Saſſes, and a new narrow Cut near* Ely; *and by their turning of* " *the River* Ouſe *out of its ancient Courſe, they have ſo abated the Water in the* " *River of* Grant *running from* Cambridge *to* Lenne, *and ſtopped for above twen-* " *ty Miles the Tide, which before came up to* Ely; *and ſo impeded the Paſſage of* " *Veſſels in the ſaid River, that (beſide what farther Charge and Inconvenience is* " *juſtly feared will hereafter happen) the Price at preſent of the Freight or Carri-* " *age of all Commodities brought up by that River, is raiſed to more than a third* " *Part above what it was ever formerly within the Memory of any Man living; to* " *the great Damage of the Univerſity and Town of* Cambridge, *and the Counties* " *adjoining: For the preventing and Remedy whereof, we have made our Addreſſes* " *by humble Petition to the Commiſſioners for the Draining of the Great Level of* " *the Fens, who notwithſtanding have paſſed Judgment, that the Level is drained* " *according to the Act of Parliament, altho' our Grievance is continued, and daily* " *increaſeth.*

" *May it therefore pleaſe your Honours to take the Premiſſes into your ſerious Con-* " *ſideration, and ſo to order that due Satisfaction may be made for our Damage hi-* " *therto, and that ſufficient Security for the future may be given for the Preſerva-* " *tion and Maintenance of the ancient and neceſſary Navigation in the foreſaid Ri-*

" *ver,*

" *ver, which is of general Concerument, as in your great Wiſdom and Care for the* " *publick Good ſhall ſeem juſt and equal.*

And your Petitioners ſhall ever pray, *&c.*

La. Seaman, *Procan.* *&c.*

WILLIAM PICKERIN, *Mayor*, *&c.*

Theſe Petitions, Allegations, and Affidavits undeniably prove the ill State of the Navigation in all the Rivers above the Sluice immediately after the erecting thereof: And at the Sluice it ſelf, there was either Delay or Danger, and often both. For the Watermen muſt either ſtay till about Level-Water, or elſe in paſſing through, the Fall of the Waters being oftentimes ſteep and ſwift, three or four Veſſels were within a Year and half ſunk in that Sluice paſſing through it. And the Sluice-doors were often ſtopped for five or ſix Days together by the Current of *Bedford* River, or Hundred-foot Drain; and during that time there could be no Paſſage by Boat.

Navigation of Lyn *prejudiced by the Undertakers Works.*

Beneath the Sluice to *Lenne-haven*, and thence to Sea, the Navigation was ſo much prejudiced, that the Corporation of *Lenne*, after much Application made and Money ſpent, finding that they ſhould not be relieved by the Commiſſioners, addreſs'd the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of *England*, and receiv'd from his Highneſs this Anſwer.

Gentlemen,

I Receiv'd yours, and cannot but let you know the good Reſentments I have of your Reſpects; aſſuring you that I ſhall be always ready to manifeſt a tender Love and Care of you, and your Welfare, and in particular of that Concernment of yours relating to Navigation. Commending you to the Grace of God, I remain

Your Loving Friend,

Whitehall, Jan. 30. 1653.

OLIVER *Protector.*

1654. But I ſuppoſe nothing was done; for *Aug.* 29. 1654. it was ordered at a Congregation then held in the *Guildhall Lenn Regis*——That Mr. *Recorder* be deſir'd to draw up a Petition to the next Parliament for *Redreſs of the Prejudices done to their Navigation by the Fen-Drainers.* And *October* 16. the Petition was read in the Hall, and ordered to be handed and made ready to be ſent up to the Parliament, which was accordingly done.

Lyn *petitions the Parliament.*

The ſaid Petition ſets forth, That the Port of *Lyn* is an ancient, uſeful Port, and had belonging to it about fourſcore Sail of Ships and Barks employ'd for the Trade of Salt, Coal, Fiſh, and other Neceſſaries; with which Commodities ten ſeveral Counties are ſupplied, more or leſs, from that Port, by the Benefit of ſeveral navigable Rivers that had their Outfall at *Lyn.*

That the Navigation up into all the ſaid Rivers has been always free, open, eaſy, and with ſmall Expence to the Countries.

That the Road or Channel to Seaward hath had competent Breadth and Depth without Danger.

This was the State of the Navigation——But of late the Undertakers for Draining, *&c.* have erected a Saſs or Sluice near *Salters-lode* upon the great River *Ouſe*, beneath the Mouth of moſt of the navigable Rivers that fell into it; whereby the Paſſage of the Tides into all the ſaid Rivers, which were wont to be filled twice in every four and twenty Hours, is wholly kept out for at leaſt 26 Miles ſhort of their uſual Flow, which occaſion very great Prejudice to Navigation; which Prejudice has ſo much increaſed ſince the Petitioners Addreſs to the Commiſſioners ſitting at *Ely* in *March* 1650. that in all Probability the Saſs or Sluice will in a ſhort time be the total Deſtruction of their Navigation.

The Words of the Act for Draining are, that *William Earl of* Bedford, *&c. ſhall cauſe the ſame to be drained and imbanked without Prejudice to Navigation in the ſaid Rivers* (that is to ſay, of *Ouſe*, *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, *Stoke*, and *Nene*, of which Complaint is now made) or Parts adjacent.

This is their Power, and the Reſtriction and Qualification of it.

And

And if the Undertakers can with any Confidence inform the World, as they do, that they have drained the Fens (which is the Work they undertook) the Petitioners crave Leave to aſſure them, with as much Confidence, and more Truth, that it is not done without Prejudice to Navigation.

And that is but modeſtly ſaid; for in ſome Places it is not without a total and irrecoverable Loſs of it; in many Places not without great Difficulties and Dangers, and in all Places not without new and exceſſive Charges, and other Diſcouragements.

It is very obſervable, as a moſt demonſtrative Argument of the Prejudice already done to Navigation, that the Port of *Lyn* hath heretofore had above fourſcore Sail of Ships and Barks, from 200 Tun downwards, belonging to it; that theſe Ships did maintain at leaſt 1500 Seamen and Watermen, that did conſtantly attend upon that Navigation; and that there was a conſtant Built of Ships in that Town ſufficient to make good that Stock: Heretofore they have been able to make fifteen Voyages at leaſt in a Year to *Newcaſtle* for Salt and Coals, and ſometimes eighteen; which was no more than ſufficient to ſupply the Countries; and they were conſtantly taken off their Hands.

It is proved, that the Navigation up the Rivers is now ſo bad, and the Water-Carriage ſo tedious, that if the Ships belonging to the Port ſhould make as many Voyages as heretofore, all the Veſſels that belong to the Rivers cannot now carry up above eight of thoſe Voyages in a Year; ſo that the Price of Freight and Commodities is now at *Cambridge* raiſed near upon one half Part: All which muſt neceſſarily occaſion Navigation it ſelf to go juſt half in half leſs than what it did before.

Theſe are ſome of the Petitioners Proofs of Prejudice, and the Undertakers for Draining are the Authors of theſe Prejudices, principally and moſt fatally by their Dam and Sluice made near *Salters-lode*, which ſtops the Freſh (that is left) from falling down when they liſt; and alſo hinders the Tides and Floods from Sea from running up into the old natural Receptacles, and returning back as they uſed to do: For want whereof, the River, Haven, and Channel is choaked up with Sea Sand.

To demonſtrate this to be the Cauſe, it muſt be laid down as a Principle, which the Undertakers themſelves will not deny, That no Inland Harbour whatſoever can poſſibly be preſerved without a ſufficient Back-Water to ſcour it out, and keep it open.

The Freſh Waters alone are not of themſelves ſufficient for that Purpoſe; for when they come to *Lyn-haven*, and below, where the Channel was wont to bear half a Mile Breadth, they are loſt in ſo large a Room, and have but little Power or Strength to do Service, as Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden* in his Diſcourſe in Print well obſerves.

The Freſh Water then not being ſufficient, it is plain that the large Indraughts of the Tides and Floods from Sea, and the Waters that were carried up with them into the ſaid ſeveral Rivers, (as into ſo many convenient Receptacles ordained by Nature for that Purpoſe) which filled the ſaid Rivers up in the Countries twice in every 24 Hours, and returned as often with long and forcible Ebbs, were the principal and effectual Means of preſerving the Rivers, Haven, and Channel open, fit for Navigation: And it was effected by a natural Cauſe. For by that time the Flood from Sea was run up into the Country as high as it uſed to flow, the Ebb was more than half ſpent at *Lyn-haven*, and reduced into the Compaſs of the Channel; ſo that the Flux of the Tide, which came in in three or four Miles room in ſome Places, moſt of it returning again in the narrow Compaſs of the Channel, muſt needs be ſuppos'd in every Man's Reaſon to fall back with ſuch exceeding Weight, Power, and Efficacy, as to be highly capable of ſcouring out any Obſtructions that might lye in the way.

But now the Dam being made near *Salters-lode*, which is but ſixteen Miles from *Lyn-haven*, the Tides are thereby cut ſhort of their ancient Receptacles of four or five Rivers at leaſt, 26 Miles in ſome of them, which is more than half the Way that the Tides did formerly flow up into the Countries; and they finding a Reſiſtance there, they make a Stand until the Flood be almoſt half run; by which means the Silt and Sand which the Tides bring up in great abundance, have time given them to fall and ſettle, which they do as the Undertakers themſelves have demonſtrated——They ſay, "*That the violent Motion of the Flood* "*ceaſing, the Soil or Silt being weighty, immediately ſettles*". But before (the

Sluices were built) being kept always in violent Motion, either flowing or reflowing with the Waters, they were carried out as faſt as they were brought in, and never ſuffered to ſettle. Therefore the ſtopping of the Tides by the Dam and Sluice near *Salters-lode*, whereby they were hindred from flowing into the Rivers, and making there a ſufficient Stock of *Back-Water* to grind out the Outfall as formerly, is the chief Cauſe of all our Prejudices and Inconveniencies. And this is farther moſt plainly prov'd, in that the Records and Experience of all former Ages witneſſes the Width, Depth, and Goodneſs of the River, Haven, and Channel, to the very time of thoſe Sluices being erected; which ſaid River, Haven, and Channel, from the ſaid Sluices to Sea, are, in about one Year's time ſince their building, ſo filted up, that in the River they cannot diſpatch above one Voyage now, in the time before they might have made three.

In the Haven where they had before eight or ten Feet at Low-water, it is now a dry Sand.

In the Channel and Road beneath the Haven, where it was near half a Mile broad, and of a Depth convenient, now a Ship can ſcarce turn up.

They pray a Prevention of theſe Inconveniencies, by timely removing the Cauſes and Obſtructions (which they conceive to be principally the new Sluice) and by reſtoring the ancient Receptacles, and Freedom of the Rivers.

The Adventurers, by way of Defence, to juſtify themſelves againſt the Petitioners Complaints before the Parliament, made the following Objections, to which the following Anſwers were given.

The Adventurers Objections to the foreſaid Petition of Lyn.

Object. 1. *That inſtead of the old little Rivers, they have given another new River, called* Bedford *River, which is as large and open, and a Receptacle at leaſt equivalent, if not better than what they have taken away: That the Tides do flow as high into the Country as formerly, with this Advantage, that they flow and return now in a ſtrait Channel inſtead of a crooked.*

Anſwer. The Bottom of this new River lies much higher than the Bottom of the old Channel——The Flood or Tide is half ſpent before it reaches the Bottom of it, and the Undertakers muſt needs equivocate when they ſay, *the Tides do flow as high into the Countries as formerly:* For it is proved, that the Tides put up before *Denver* Sluices were built, 26 Miles at leaſt above thoſe Sluices; and this new River is not above 21 Miles long in all, and of that the Tide puts up not above 12 Miles at Spring-Tides, and at ordinary Tides not above three Miles, by reaſon of the aſcending Situation of the River; therefore is by no means a Receptacle equivalent to the old Rivers——The meaneſt Watermen know that a crooked Channel keeps up the Water, and is very helpful and advantageous to Navigation; whereas in a right Channel, eſpecially upon a riſing Ground as this is, the Waters ſlip away much faſter, and leave the Bottom of it almoſt dry.

Object. 2. *It was the Drineſs of the Seaſon, and not the Undertakers Works, that had prejudiced Navigation; for if the Springs are dry, the Stream muſt needs fail.——That the City of* London *do not petition, in regard the Navigation of the* Thames *was never ſo bad.*

Anſ. In the greateſt Droughts within any Man's Remembrance, when the Fens were near as dry as they were at the Adjudication; yet the like Prejudices to Navigation were never known, as ſince the Undertakers Works.——Dry Seaſons may poſſibly prejudice Navigation, where it depends merely upon Land-Springs or Waters; but where the Stock of Water that ſhould preſerve Navigation comes from the Sea, the Drineſs of the Seaſon can do little hurt, if the Sea-Floods may be permitted to have their Flow; for it is moſt apparent, that in the drieſt Years the Sea-Floods keep their uſual Marks, and flow as high, and ſome time higher than at other times: Witneſs ſome Tides this laſt Year, which were as great as have been known in any Man's Remembrance.——If the Undertakers ſhould make a Dam over the *Thames* at *London-Bridge*, or *Greenwich*, ſo as the Tide ſhould be permitted to paſs up no higher, the Petitioners would then

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Anſ. In the greateſt Droughts within any Man's Remembrance, when the Fens were near as dry as they were at the Adjudication; yet the like Prejudices to Navigation were never known, as ſince the Undertakers Works.——Dry Seaſons may poſſibly prejudice Navigation, where it depends merely upon Land-Springs or Waters; but where the Stock of Water that ſhould preſerve Navigation comes from the Sea, the Drineſs of the Seaſon can do little hurt, if the Sea-Floods may be permitted to have their Flow; for it is moſt apparent, that in the drieſt Years the Sea-Floods keep their uſual Marks, and flow as high, and ſome time higher than at other times: Witneſs ſome Tides this laſt Year, which were as great as have been known in any Man's Remembrance.——If the Undertakers ſhould make a Dam over the *Thames* at *London-Bridge*, or *Greenwich*, ſo as the Tide ſhould be permitted to paſs up no higher, the Petitioners would then

think the Undertakers would have Cauſe to commend the Modeſty of the City, if they ſhould not complain in Behalf of their Navigation.

Object. 3. *The Commiſſioners hearing all Objections, and after Examination of Witneſſes upon Oath, and after their own View upon the Place, have adjudged the Fens drained according to the Act.*

Anſw. Before the Commiſſioners at *Ely*, the Country objected, That it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon, and not the Undertakers Works, that had drained the Fens, and ſo deſired a Reſpite of the Adjudication; but could not obtain it, the Undertakers pretending their Works had done it: But when at the ſame time the Prejudices to Navigation were urged, then it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon had occaſion'd them, and not their Works: And ſo they made Advantage of Providence both in the good and bad Effects of that dry Seaſon.——The Commiſſioners did not, nor could by their View at *Ely*, judge that the Undertakers Works had not prejudiced Navigation at *Lyn*.

Object. 4. *It was proved upon the Adjudication, that full as much, if not more, freſh Water did run out at* Lyn-haven *as formerly.*

Anſw. The Waters of *Nene*, which are proved to be a conſiderable Part of the freſh Waters that fall down that way, were wholly taken from *Lyn-haven*, and turned to *Wisbech*, which is another Outfall; and yet when ſo great a Part is taken away, the Remainder is full as much, if not more than the whole, by their Arithmetick.

Object. 5. *The raiſing the Price of Water-Carriage was a Contrivance of Watermen, and ſome of Ability offered to carry as cheap as ever.*

Anſw. It is depoſed, That it is no Contrivance; the Price is raiſed upon juſt Grounds, in reſpect they cannot now make half ſo many Voyages as formerly, and them not without double the Labour, Charge, and Waſte of their Stock, as before: And Servants have now almoſt double Wages, in regard of double the Time and Labour they are put to in haling, *&c.*

Object. 6. *In former Times there never was any conſtant Summer Navigation to* Cambridge: *This laſt Summer there was.*

Anſw. But that the Undertakers take a Privilege to ſay what they pleaſe, they would never have objected this: The Navigation this laſt Summer was much leſs conſtant than in former Years, and had more frequent Interruptions.

Object. 7. *In regard the Petitions of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *tend to the overthrowing the whole Work of Draining, and call in queſtion Matters of Fact adjudged by the Commiſſioners upon their View; therefore the Petitioners are not to be relieved even in Parliament.*

Anſw. It was not underſtood before this time, that Navigation and the Work of Draining were inconſiſtent: It ſeems by this they are, and that the preſerving the one is the overthrowing of the other; if there be no Medium to reconcile them, the Clauſe in the Act was made in vain: And if it be ſo that both cannot ſtand together, the Petitioners ſhall propound, that the Advantages to the Commonwealth by Navigation, and the Improvements by the Fens, may be put into the Scales, and that which is found lighteſt, let that be diſcountenanced according to Juſtice. But certainly there is no ſuch Matter, they may be eaſily reconciled, if the Undertakers will, as the Act directs them, drain and perfect their Work by imbanking the old natural Channels, and not turn Nature out of her Courſe, nor ſtop her in it.——The Petitioners are indeed to blame, not to learn from the Undertakers, that the Parliament's Power is leſs now than heretofore, and that they are in this Matter eſpecially to receive Laws from the Undertakers, who are relievable by them, and who not.——So far Objections and Anſwers.

The Petition of Lyn *rejected.*

The Undertakers were ſuch very great Men, and ſo very powerful, that the Petition of *Lyn* was but cooly receiv'd. I do not find in the Journal of that Houſe of Commons, that the Corporation of *Lyn* obtain'd Leave to bring in a Bill for the bettering their Navigation; which Defeat I conceive to have been

entirely owing to the Greatneſs and Intereſt of the Undertakers, becauſe ſeveral Things were about this time done for the Encouragement of Navigation; and becauſe the Lord Protector did, in a Letter ſign'd by himſelf to the Corporation of *Lyn* the Year before, aſſure them, that *he ſhould always be ready to manifeſt a particular Care of that Concernment of theirs relating to the Navigation*——Yet in this neceſſary Caſe nothing was done.

And the Petitioners obſerving this prevalent Intereſt of the Undertakers, they were diſcouraged from attempting any farther Relief in Parliament, during the Lord Protector's Government.

When King *Charles* II. was reſtor'd to the Crown, the Acts of the late Lord Protector became invalid: Conſequently that of 1649. under Colour of which the Works complained of were made, was no longer in Force. So that the Undertakers for Draining ſtood upon the Foot of the Law made by the Commiſſioners of Sewers, *A°.* 6. *Car.* 1. and became ſubject to the general Commiſſion of Sewers. Which perplexing the ſaid Undertakers, they procured an Act of Parliament the 15th of *Car.* 2. entitled, *An Act for ſettling the Draining of the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level*; by which they were incorporated by the Name of "the Governor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the Company of Conſervators of the Great Level of the Fens, called *Bedford Level*, to have perpetual Succeſſion for ever. And it is therein enacted,

A. D. 1663. *An Act for ſettling the Draining the Fens.*

"That the Governor, ſix Bailiffs, and twenty Conſervators, or any five or more, ſhould be Commiſſioners of Sewers within the ſaid Level, and the Works without the ſaid Level, for conveying the Waters of the ſaid Level to Sea.

"That no other Commiſſioners of Sewers ſhall intermeddle, *&c.*

Upon paſſing this Act, the Town of *Lyn* did, by their Repreſentatives, oppoſe the continuing of the Dam and Sluices made croſs the River *Ouſe* at *Denver* and at *Erith*, and they procured theſe following Clauſes to be inſerted in the ſaid Act.

"In caſe, through, or by reaſon of their Undertaking for Draining aforeſaid, in the 6th Year of *Car.* 1. 1620. the Adventurers have done, or ſhall do any Act or Acts to the Prejudice of Navigation, or whereby Navigation in the Rivers *Ouſe* and *Grant*, or other navigable Rivers paſſing through that Level, be, or ſhall be interrupted, obſtructed, or made worſe; that then the Commiſſioners therein named, or any ſeven or more of them, whereof the Vice-chancellor, the Mayors of *Cambridge* and *Lyn* for the time being (if preſent) to be three, ſhall and may decree the ſame to be made good and amended, at the proper Coſts and Charges of the ſaid Corporation, as to their Judgment ſhall ſeem meet.

"And if that Corporation ſhall neglect, or refuſe to repair and make good the ſame, according to, and within the time to be limited by ſuch Decree, that then the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſeven of them, by Warrant under their Hands and Seals atteſted, to tax the ſaid 95,000 Acres in ſuch Sum and Sums of Money, as to their Judgment ſhall ſeem meet, for the making, preſerving, and keeping the Navigation in any of the ſaid Rivers, as the ſame were in the 6th of *Car.* 1. 1620. by the then Law of Sewers, with Power to levy ſuch Taxes and Aſſeſsments by Diſtreſs and Sale, *&c.*

"And whereas the Draining aforeſaid, and future Maintenance of the ſaid Great Level, ought to be without Prejudice to Navigation; and becauſe all Complaints which have been made, and all Prejudices which have been, or ſhall be done to particular Perſons, Pariſhes, and Places, cannot by this Act be ſufficiently provided for and remedied,

"Certain Commiſſioners are therein named and appointed, (*viz.*) Seven for each of the ſix Counties extending into the Fens, for regulating Grievances.

"And for ſupplying the Number of thoſe Commiſſioners, in caſe of Death or Incapacity, it is enacted, That within three Months after ſuch Death or Incapacity, the remaining Commiſſioners of each County of which ſuch were, or the major Part of them, ſhould from time nominate and appoint by Deed to be enrolled in *Chancery*, other fit Perſons reſiding in the ſame County in ſtead, *&c.* which Commiſſioners, or any ſeven or more of them, ſhould hear and determine Complaints, Grievances, *&c.* *See an Abſtract of this Act in the Appendix.*

The

think the Undertakers would have Cauſe to commend the Modeſty of the City, if they ſhould not complain in Behalf of their Navigation.

Object. 3. *The Commiſſioners hearing all Objections, and after Examination of Witneſſes upon Oath, and after their own View upon the Place, have adjudged the Fens drained according to the Act.*

Anſw. Before the Commiſſioners at *Ely*, the Country objected, That it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon, and not the Undertakers Works, that had drained the Fens, and ſo deſired a Reſpite of the Adjudication; but could not obtain it, the Undertakers pretending their Works had done it: But when at the ſame time the Prejudices to Navigation were urged, then it was the Drineſs of the Seaſon had occaſion'd them, and not their Works: And ſo they made Advantage of Providence both in the good and bad Effects of that dry Seaſon.——The Commiſſioners did not, nor could by their View at *Ely*, judge that the Undertakers Works had not prejudiced Navigation at *Lyn*.

Object. 4. *It was proved upon the Adjudication, that full as much, if not more, freſh Water did run out at* Lyn-haven *as formerly.*

Anſw. The Waters of *Nene*, which are proved to be a conſiderable Part of the freſh Waters that fall down that way, were wholly taken from *Lyn-haven*, and turned to *Wisbech*, which is another Outfall; and yet when ſo great a Part is taken away, the Remainder is full as much, if not more than the whole, by their Arithmetick.

Object. 5. *The raiſing the Price of Water-Carriage was a Contrivance of Watermen, and ſome of Ability offered to carry as cheap as ever.*

Anſw. It is depoſed, That it is no Contrivance; the Price is raiſed upon juſt Grounds, in reſpect they cannot now make half ſo many Voyages as formerly, and them not without double the Labour, Charge, and Waſte of their Stock, as before: And Servants have now almoſt double Wages, in regard of double the Time and Labour they are put to in haling, *&c.*

Object. 6. *In former Times there never was any conſtant Summer Navigation to* Cambridge: *This laſt Summer there was.*

Anſw. But that the Undertakers take a Privilege to ſay what they pleaſe, they would never have objected this: The Navigation this laſt Summer was much leſs conſtant than in former Years, and had more frequent Interruptions.

Object. 7. *In regard the Petitions of* Lyn *and* Cambridge *tend to the overthrowing the whole Work of Draining, and call in queſtion Matters of Fact adjudged by the Commiſſioners upon their View; therefore the Petitioners are not to be relieved even in Parliament.*

Anſw. It was not underſtood before this time, that Navigation and the Work of Draining were inconſiſtent: It ſeems by this they are, and that the preſerving the one is the overthrowing of the other; if there be no Medium to reconcile them, the Clauſe in the Act was made in vain: And if it be ſo that both cannot ſtand together, the Petitioners ſhall propound, that the Advantages to the Commonwealth by Navigation, and the Improvements by the Fens, may be put into the Scales, and that which is found lighteſt, let that be diſcountenanced according to Juſtice. But certainly there is no ſuch Matter, they may be eaſily reconciled, if the Undertakers will, as the Act directs them, drain and perfect their Work by imbanking the old natural Channels, and not turn Nature out of her Courſe, nor ſtop her in it.——The Petitioners are indeed to blame, not to learn from the Undertakers, that the Parliament's Power is leſs now than heretofore, and that they are in this Matter eſpecially to receive Laws from the Undertakers, who are relievable by them, and who not.——So far Objections and Anſwers.

The Petition of Lyn *rejected.*

The Undertakers were ſuch very great Men, and ſo very powerful, that the Petition of *Lyn* was but cooly receiv'd. I do not find in the Journal of that Houſe of Commons, that the Corporation of *Lyn* obtain'd Leave to bring in a Bill for the bettering their Navigation; which Defeat I conceive to have been

entirely owing to the Greatneſs and Intereſt of the Undertakers, becauſe ſeveral Things were about this time done for the Encouragement of Navigation; and becauſe the Lord Protector did, in a Letter ſign'd by himſelf to the Corporation of *Lyn* the Year before, aſſure them, that *he ſhould always be ready to manifeſt a particular Care of that Concernment of theirs relating to the Navigation*——Yet in this neceſſary Caſe nothing was done.

And the Petitioners obſerving this prevalent Intereſt of the Undertakers, they were diſcouraged from attempting any farther Relief in Parliament, during the Lord Protector's Government.

When King *Charles* II. was reſtor'd to the Crown, the Acts of the late Lord Protector became invalid: Conſequently that of 1649. under Colour of which the Works complained of were made, was no longer in Force. So that the Undertakers for Draining ſtood upon the Foot of the Law made by the Commiſſioners of Sewers, *A°. 6. Car.* 1. and became ſubject to the general Commiſſion of Sewers. Which perplexing the ſaid Undertakers, they procured an Act of Parliament the 15th of *Car.* 2. entitled, *An Act for ſettling the Draining of the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level*; by which they were incorporated by the Name of "the Governor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the Company of Con- "ſervators of the Great Level of the Fens, called *Bedford Level*, to have per- "petual Succeſſion for ever. And it is therein enacted,

A. D. 1663. *An Act for ſettling the Draining the Fens.*

"That the Governor, ſix Bailiffs, and twenty Conſervators, or any five or "more, ſhould be Commiſſioners of Sewers within the ſaid Level, and the "Works without the ſaid Level, for conveying the Waters of the ſaid Level to "Sea.

"That no other Commiſſioners of Sewers ſhall intermeddle, *&c.*

Upon paſſing this Act, the Town of *Lyn* did, by their Repreſentatives, oppoſe the continuing of the Dam and Sluices made croſs the River *Ouſe* at *Denver* and at *Erith*, and they procured theſe following Clauſes to be inſerted in the ſaid Act.

"In caſe, through, or by reaſon of their Undertaking for Draining aforeſaid, "in the 6th Year of *Car.* 1. 1620. the Adventurers have done, or ſhall do any "Act or Acts to the Prejudice of Navigation, or whereby Navigation in the "Rivers *Ouſe* and *Grant*, or other navigable Rivers paſſing through that Level, "be, or ſhall be interrupted, obſtructed, or made worſe; that then the Com- "miſſioners therein named, or any ſeven or more of them, whereof the Vice- "chancellor, the Mayors of *Cambridge* and *Lyn* for the time being (if preſent) "to be three, ſhall and may decree the ſame to be made good and amended, "at the proper Coſts and Charges of the ſaid Corporation, as to their Judgment "ſhall ſeem meet.

"And if that Corporation ſhall neglect, or refuſe to repair and make good the "ſame, according to, and within the time to be limited by ſuch Decree, that "then the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſeven of them, by Warrant under their "Hands and Seals atteſted, to tax the ſaid 95,000 Acres in ſuch Sum and Sums "of Money, as to their Judgment ſhall ſeem meet, for the making, preſerving, "and keeping the Navigation in any of the ſaid Rivers, as the ſame were in the "6th of *Car.* 1. 1620. by the then Law of Sewers, with Power to levy ſuch "Taxes and Aſſeſsments by Diſtreſs and Sale, *&c.*

"And whereas the Draining aforeſaid, and future Maintenance of the ſaid Great "Level, ought to be without Prejudice to Navigation; and becauſe all Com- "plaints which have been made, and all Prejudices which have been, or ſhall "be done to particular Perſons, Pariſhes, and Places, cannot by this Act be ſuf- "ficiently provided for and remedied,

"Certain Commiſſioners are therein named and appointed, (*viz.*) Seven for "each of the ſix Counties extending into the Fens, for regulating Grievances.

"And for ſupplying the Number of thoſe Commiſſioners, in caſe of Death "or Incapacity, it is enacted, That within three Months after ſuch Death or "Incapacity, the remaining Commiſſioners of each County of which ſuch were, "or the major Part of them, ſhould from time nominate and appoint by Deed "to be enrolled in *Chancery*, other fit Perſons reſiding in the ſame County in "ſtead, *&c.* which Commiſſioners, or any ſeven or more of them, ſhould hear "and determine Complaints, Grievances, *&c.* *See an Abſtract of this Act in the Appendix.*

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A. D. 1669. Lyn *addreſſes the Commiſſioners appointed by the Act, 15. C. 2.*

The Corporation of *Lyn* complained to theſe Commiſſioners, *Anno* 1669, 1676, 1677, of the Prejudices done to their Navigation by the ſaid Corporation of Fen-Drainers, and repreſented their increaſing Danger of total Loſs of it; but could obtain no Relief, while the Commiſſioners that were named in the Act lived. And as they died, for want of Nomination in Succeſſion, as mention'd in the foreſaid Act of Parliament, this Judicature became extinct, and the Remedies preſcribed by the ſaid Act conſequently determin'd.

Thereupon the Corporation of *Lyn* had Opportunity of Recourſe to Parliament once more for Redreſs: And becauſe their Complaints might not be thought to reſt upon a bare conſtructive or imaginary Prejudice, they draw'd up a Scheme, which demonſtrated their Prejudice to be real, by ſhewing the Depth of Water there was in the River, Haven, and Channel before the erecting of *Denver* Sluices; and the Depth of Water in the River, Haven, and Channel juſt after thoſe Sluices were built, and the Hundred-foot Drain was made, and the Waters of *Ouſe* turned down that Drain. As for Example:

Depth of Ouſe, &c. *before it was ſluiced.*

In 1645, *the River at* Lenne *was in Breadth about a Furlong, and the Ships did that Year, and ſeveral Years after, ride at Anchor at the* South *End of the Town, and on the* Weſt *Side of the River in two Fathom at Low-water, having then ſuch ſtrong Tides, that they were often forced to moor with a Stream Cable, which is one extraordinary to hold them faſt.*

One Mile below the Town, on the *Eaſt* Side the River, was a Road called *the Crutch*, where Ships for ſeveral Years had their Safety, when Occaſion ſerved to ſtop their Tide, having at *Low-water* 12 *Feet Depth.*

In the Channel of *Lenne*, amongſt the Sands, of which there are to Seaward great Numbers, and many of them in ordinary Tides but juſt covered, there were two good Channels, one called the *Eaſt*, the other *Weſt* Channel; in which *the biggeſt Ships, drawing* 13 *or* 14 *Foot Water, ſailed up and down, as well on the Neip, as on the Spring-Tides,*

At the lower End of theſe Channels, over-againſt *Hitcham*, were two good Roads, the one called *Fielne*, which the *Weſt* Channel runs into; the other *Ferrier* in the *Eaſt*, in which Roads was 3 ½ *Fathom Water at Low-water* in the Year 1645, which was before the erecting *Denver* Sluices.

Shallowneſs ſince ſluiced.

About the Year 1660, (which was after the Sluices were erected) the Road on the *Weſt* Side of the River grew *ſo ſhallow*, that *no Ships could ride.*——The Channel by the Town *much ſhallower.*———That between *Common-ſtaith* and *St. Ann's* dried up.——The Road at the *Crutch* had *but* 9 *Foot Water.*——The *Weſt* Channel and the Road of *Feilne* much worſe than formerly.

In the Year 1670, moſt of the Ships, where they formerly had 9 or 10 Foot Water at Low-water, *lay a ground before the Town.*——The *Weſt* Channel was much worſe than in the Year 1660.

In the Year 1675 and 1676, the *Weſt Channel was grown up*— and *Feilne Road loſt*, ſo that the Ships had no other Road but *Ferrier*, which was *then much ſhallower than in former Years.*

From the Year 1675, to this preſent Year 1696; from the *South* End of *Lenne* to *Ferrier* Road, the River and Channel hath, from Year to Year, *gradually grown worſe and worſe*, The Road at the *Crutch* having now but three Foot Water at Low-water, and on the Neip-Tides a Ship of *nine Foot Draught cannot ſail from Town, nor indeed upon a Spring-Tide, if the Wind be contrary.*

A Ship of 12 Feet Draught cannot come from *Ferrier* Road, but muſt lie by the way *for want of Water*; where the Sands are ſo bad, that no Ship is able to bear her Burden, but *breaks in pieces*; as by Experience of many Ships in Town that have come to great Damages, from 100 *l.* to 400 *l. per* Ship, and ſome render'd incapable of going any more to Sea.

And all the Houſes between *Commonſtaith* and *St. Ann's* are become little worth for want of Water, there being now a *great Sand*, where formerly there was 10 *Foot Water, at Low-water-Mark.*

Denver *Sluices the Cauſe of Decay of the River, Haven, and Channel.*

The Occaſion of this River, Channel and Road growing up, as plainly appears, is the Sluices that are built at 15 or 16 Miles above *Lenne*, which doth not only ſtop the Outlet of the River that extends 40 Miles above the Sluices, but ſtops the free Paſſage of the Tide of Flood, which comes out of the Sea: For it is obſervable by us, whoſe Hands are hereunto ſubſcribed, to which if

requeſted we are ready to give our Oaths; That in the Years aforeſaid, before the Sluices were built, there did not only run ſuch a *ſtrong Ebb-Tide*, that we could *ſcarcely hold the Ships faſt*; but alſo *a Flood-Tide as ſtrong and vehement as the Ebb: Which Tide of Flood then run full five Hours and a half.*

Since the building of the Sluices the Tides have greatly abated.—The Low-water Channel, Year after Year, grown higher and higher, and is now between *Lenne* and *Ferrier* Road grown to that prodigious Height, that the Tide of Flood meeting all the way extraordinary riſing Grounds or Sands, it abates one half of its Force, and time of running. For a Spring-Tide now runs but three Hours; ſo that it evidently appears, that on the Top of a Spring a Ship of 12 Feet Draught dare not come out of *Ferrier* Road but with a fair Wind. In which Road there is now but 11 *Feet Water at Low-water-Mark*; and to all appearance, if the Sluices ſtand ſeven Years longer, *Ferrier* Road will be grown quite up, *and then there will be no Road for a Ship to ride in that is bound for* Lenne *.

If it be objected, that the River at the Entrance is grown wider than in former Years, we know that it is ſo; that is to ſay, between Marſh and Marſh, which is occaſioned by the Violence of the Sea, and cannot be avoided; but then we know the Channel to be twice as narrow as in former Years, both before the Town and in the *Crutch*. Tho' the Sea hath beaten away ſome of the Marſh, it hath not made the River any wider: For the Tide for ſome hundred of Yards runs not near the Marſh upon the *Weſt* Point, but in the Low-water Channel, which is *now twice as narrow as in former Years.*

The Truth of what is here laid open, is corroborated by innumerable Witneſſes; ſome few of which I ſhall here enumerate, *viz.*

Edward Elſden, aged 72, hath known the Haven and Channel 50 Years and upwards, having been a Ship-maſter here for great Part of that time.

Thomas Autingham, aged 73, hath known this Haven and Channel 50 Years.

Edward Maſon, aged 72, hath known this Haven and Channel 50 Years.

John Fuller, aged 57, hath known this Haven and Channel 43 Years.

William Fuller, aged 52, hath known this Haven and Channel 37 Years.

Edmond Quaſh, aged 46, hath known this Haven and Channel 30 Years.

And they ſay——That before the Sluices were erected and made croſs the River *Ouſe* near *Salters-lode*——the Channel to Sea was ſo deep and open, that there was *two Fathom Water* at the ſame Places and Time of the Tide, where there is now not above *two Foot Water*; and ſo in Proportion for many Miles together.

That the Tide, before the ſaid Sluices were erected, uſually flow'd *above five Hours*, where it now floweth *not above three Hours.*

That the Decay and ſilting up of the Haven and Channel hath apparently been occaſioned by the ſaid Sluices, they having ever ſince the erecting the Sluices yearly declined, and viſibly grown worſe and worſe, for want of the Flood going up, as formerly it uſed to do, beyond the Sluices.

That the Haven and Channel are now ſo ſilted up, and daily grow worſe by reaſon of the ſaid Sluices, that there is the greateſt Danger and Likelihood of the entire Loſs of the Navigation, unleſs ſome ſpeedy Remedy be found for its Preſervation and Amendment.

John Attleſon, aged 80 Years, or thereabout, for 60 Years and upwards, hath known the River of *Ouſe*, and all the Rivers falling into the ſame, *viz.* the old River, which anciently fell from *Bedford* and *St. Ives* into the *Ouſe* by *Harrimer*; alſo *Cambridge* River, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, and *Stoke* Rivers, all of them falling into the ſaid River *Ouſe*. And he ſaith——

That before the erecting the Sluices near *Salters-lode*, all the Rivers were free and open, and received ſuch Quantities of Water by the Flood from Sea, that large Barges and Veſſels, with from 26 to 30 Chaldron of Coals, did conſtantly paſs with great Eaſe up to *Cambridge* Town.

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* This Fear was well grounded, and was the Effect of Experience, Obſervation, and Judgment: For *Ferrier* Road is long ſince grown up.

That before erecting the ſaid Sluices, at *Harrimer* beyond *Ely*, the River was at leaſt *five Foot deeper than now it is*; and where large Boats and Barges uſually paſſed in the old adjacent River, Graſs and Fodder is now mown and cut.

That ſince the ſaid Sluices were erected, all the Rivers are ſo ſhallow and grown up, that where the ſaid great Barges did uſually paſs with from 26 to 30 Chaldrons Freight, now flat-bottom'd Lighters with 8 or 10 Chaldrons of Coals cannot paſs without great Difficulty and Charge, and Delay for want of Water.

That before the erecting the ſaid Sluices, the Water uſually waxed about nine Miles beyond *Ely*, which are now utterly ſtopped at the Sluice.

That there is great Difficulty of Paſſage at the Sluices, being *often ſtopped* for five or ſix Days together *by the Current of* Bedford *River*.

That *Bedford* River is ſhallow, and upon riſing Ground, and receives a very inconſiderable Quantity of Water, in reſpect of what did uſually flow up the ſaid other Rivers.

That where in the River between *Lenne-haven* and *Salters-lode* great Barges and Keels uſed to paſs at Low-water, ſuch Veſſels cannot now paſs at a High-water, ſo as ſuch Barges and Keels have been left off and diſuſed for twenty Years paſt. And all this is alſo atteſted for Truth by

Richard Allen, aged 75, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 60 Years.
John Curle, aged 76 Years, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 40 Years.
William Walwyn, aged 63 Years, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 50 Years.
Thomas Chiles, aged 63 Years, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 46 Years.
Francis Lord, aged 66 Years, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 46 Years.
John Chiles, aged 64 Years, who hath known the ſaid Rivers for 46 Years.
Richard Thirkpenny, aged 53 Years, who hath known the ſaid River for 40 Years.

The Rivers and Channels thus gradually decaying and growing up, to the manifeſt Prejudice of Navigation in general in theſe Parts; and the Sluices erected at *Denver* and at *Erith* croſs the River of *Great Ouſe*, being by Experience found, and by Demonſtration prov'd to be the Cauſe of Prejudice: And as the Rivers and Channels had, ever ſince thoſe Sluices were built, yearly decayed, it was by natural Deduction with Reaſon believed and dreaded, that the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* would in a few Years be totally loſt, unleſs the ſaid Sluices were ſpeedily removed, and the ancient natural Freedom and Courſe of the Rivers were reſtored.

Therefore the Mayor of *Lyn* writ the following Letter upon this Subject to the Duke of *Bedford*, Governor of the Corporation of Adventurers.

May it pleaſe your Grace,

A. D. 1695. *Mayor of* Lyn *his Letter to the Governor of* Bedford *Level.*

THE preſent Condition of this Port and Harbour, and the old navigable Rivers falling into the ſame, have given us Occaſion (under the ſaddeſt Apprehenſions of a total and irrecoverable Loſs of our Navigation) to conſider the Cauſes, and to ſeek the ſpeedieſt Redreſs. And it appearing by the plaineſt and moſt undeniable Proofs, and too long Experience, that our Miſchiefs had their Riſe and Continuance from the Dam and Sluice ſet by the Corporation of Adventurers at Salters-lode*: Whereby the Tide hath been reſtrain'd more than 24 Miles of its ancient Flow toward* Cambridge*, and proportionably in other Rivers; and the great River* Ouſe *from thence to this Port, and from hence to Sea, is almoſt entirely ſilted up, and become impaſſible, for want of a ſufficient Indraught of Water to ſcour them out; and there being no Means to give us Relief, or reſtore our Navigation, but by removing the ſaid Dam or Sluice: We are conſtrain'd on behalf of our ſelves, and the many Counties, Towns, and Places concern'd in Trade with us, to make this our humble Application.*

Beſeeching your Grace, that by your favourable Influence on the Corporation of Adventurers, we may obtain ſuch timely Relief from them, as the approaching Danger, the Juſtneſs of our Cauſe, and the Obligations they lye under of preſerving our Navigation require. And the rather, in regard the Methods for our Relief preſcribed by the late Act for ſettling the draining the Fens are become impracticable; and that if the Adventurers ſhall not agree to give us Relief, whereby we ſhall be forced to prefer our Petition to the Lords and Commons, your Grace will pleaſe to

afford it that Countenance and Encouragement, the Matters of Fact, and Reasons therein alledg'd, shall appear to deserve.

All which we humbly beg your Grace will vouchsafe to take into your Consideration. I am,

For this Corporation and my self,

My LORD,

Your GRACE's

Most Humble,

Most Obedient Servant,

EDM. HOOKE, Mayor.

King's-Lyn, Norfolk,
6. Jan. 1695.

This Letter was delivered to the Governor by the late Sir *Henry Hobart*, Sir *John Turner*, *Robert Walpole*, Esq; and the present Sir *Charles Turner*, who were introduced to his Grace by Admiral *Russel*, (Knight of the Shire for *Cambridgeshire*) his Grace receiv'd them very kindly, and expressed a great Resentment of the Civility they show'd him. After which he caused the Letter to be read, and then said, that he would willingly do them all the Kindness he could, but that it was not in his Power alone; but if they applied to the Corporation of Adventurers at their Meeting, (which would be that Day seven-night at the *Temple*) they should consider of their Demands: And if they could offer any thing to convince them that they were just and reasonable, they would relieve them. *Answer to the Letter.*

Mr. *Walpole* requested that the Letter might be communicated to them in the mean time, that they might have their Answer at their meeting, that *Lyn* might not lose time, and the Opportunity of redressing themselves by Parliament this Sessions, if in case their Resolutions should be contrary. Upon that his Grace ask'd my Lord *Gorges* (who was the first Bailiff of their Corporation, and who was believ'd to be present on purpose to receive them) Whether they could have an Answer then or not. My Lord *Gorges* told them very readily, and plainly, that if their Demand was to have the Sluice removed (as he perceiv'd by *Lyn* Letter) they might have their Answer from the Corporation of Adventurers at their Meeting, that it had cost them 7000 Pounds; that the Issue would be for *Lyn* to prove, the Sluice was the Cause of their Misfortune, which he did not question but could be made appear otherwise, *&c.* The Corporation of *Lyn* receiving no satisfactory Answer from the Corporation of Adventurers, and several Meetings being had to no Effect; finding they could get no Relief from them, and being by Experience throughly convinced, that the Navigation of their Port would be utterly destroy'd and lost without Relief; they therefore most humbly petitioned the Parliament, and obtained Leave to bring in a Bill for the better Preservation of the Navigation of *Lyn*. And

Mercurij 6. die Januarij 8. Gul. 3.

1696. Sir *Charles Turner* (according to Order) presented to the House a Bill for the better Preservation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk*; and the same was received. *Lyn petitions the Parliament for Relief.*

The Bill was read the first time:

And set forth, *The Bill in Parliament.*

" That whereas the Port and Burgh of *King's-Lyn*, situate on the River of " *Great Ouse*, by means thereof, and of the Rivers of *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Bran-* " *don*, and *Stoke*, and other navigable Rivers falling into the same, hath main- " tained a considerable foreign and inland Trade, and conveyed into many Coun- " ties all Sorts of Goods and Merchandizes, and exported thence Corn, and " other Commodities of their own Growth and Manufacture, to the great Ad- " vancement of Trade, Increase of his Majesty's Customs and Revenues, the " building many Ships, and Breed of able Mariners.

" And whereas the Corporation of the Governor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty " of the Company of Conservators of the great Level of the Fens, called *Bed-* " *ford* Level, by Colour of a pretended Act of Parliament made in the Year " 1649. and of one other Act of Parliament made in the 15th Year of King

" *Charles*

" *Charles* the IId, for ſettling the Draining of the ſaid Level; have, among " other their Works, erected and made, or cauſed to be erected and made a Dam " and Sluice upon the ſaid River of *Great Ouſe*, at a Place called *Denver* Dam " in the ſaid County of *Norfolk*, between the Sea and the Place where the ſaid " Rivers of *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon* and *Stoke* fall into the ſaid River of " *Great Ouſe*. Which Dam and Sluice are by Experience found to be to the " Prejudice of Navigation in the ſaid Rivers, not only by long and frequent " Stops and Delays to Barges, Boats, and Veſſels in the Paſſage through the ſame; " but by ſtreightening the ſaid River of *Great Ouſe* at the Place where the ſaid " Dam and Sluice are made, and obſtructing and diverting the ancient Courſe " of the Flow and Reflow of the Tides about 24 Miles in the ſaid River of " *Great Ouſe*, and in Proportion in the ſaid other Rivers; whereby the great " Streams are divided and weaken'd, and all the ſaid navigable Rivers, and the " Haven and Channel of the Port of the ſaid Burgh are choaked and grown up, " ſo as the Navigation of the ſaid Port and Rivers are in Danger of being en- " tirely loſt, if not timely prevented.

" And whereas by *Magna Charta*, and many other Statutes of this Realm " ſtill in Force, all Obſtructions and Impediments in and upon any navigable " Rivers, Streams or Floods, whereby the Paſſage of Ships, Barges, Boats or " Veſſels in the ſame are or may be interrupted or hinder'd, are prohibited as " Annoyances tending to the great Damage of the King and his People.

" And whereas the Draining of the ſaid Level of the Fens, and Maintenance " thereof, were by the ſaid Acts for Draining declared and intended to be with- " out Prejudice to Navigation. And the ſaid Stops and Annoyances by the ſaid " Dam and Sluice, for the Reaſons aforeſaid, are contrary to *Magna Charta* and " the ſaid ſeveral Statutes, and againſt the Intent and true Meaning of the ſaid " Act for Draining. But the Remedies and Proviſions directed by the ſaid Act " of the 15th Year of King *Charles* the IId againſt ſuch Obſtructions, or for re- " moving the ſame, are in no wiſe ſufficient to anſwer thoſe Ends, or to prevent " or make Satisfaction for the Damage the whole Kingdom in general muſt ſuſtain " by the Loſs of the Navigation of the ſaid Port and Rivers.

" Be it therefore enacted, *&c.* That the ſaid Corporation, *&c.* ſhall take up, " abate, and wholly remove, or cauſe, *&c.* the ſaid Sluice and Dam ſo erected, " and made upon the ſaid River of *Great Ouſe* as aforeſaid, with the Founda- " tions and Materials thereof out of the ſaid River, on or before the Day " of which ſhall be in the Year of our Lord 169 And in caſe it ſhall " not be ſo removed as aforeſaid, it ſhall and may be lawful to and for the May- " or and Burgeſſes of the ſaid Burgh of *King's-Lyn*, their Agents, Officers, or " Perſons by them to be employed, to take up, abate, and wholly to remove " out of the ſaid River of *Great Ouſe* the ſaid Dam and Sluice, and to ſell and " convert to the Uſe of the ſaid Mayor and Burgeſſes, ſo many of the Materials " thereof, as ſhall and may be ſufficient to defray the Charges, *&c.*

" And be it farther enacted, *&c.* That if any Perſon or Perſons, Body Po- " litick or Corporate, ſhall at any time or times hereafter erect or build, or cauſe " or procure, *&c.* any Dam or Sluice upon the ſaid great River, or any other " the navigable Rivers aforeſaid, in any Place or Places where ſuch River or " Rivers ſhall be navigable, ſuch Dam and Sluice ſhall be deemed a common " Nuſance, and proceeded againſt accordingly.

RESOLVED,

That the Bill be read a ſecond time upon this Day ſe'nnight.

Jovis 7. die Januarij.

Huntingdon *Petition againſt the Bill.*

A Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and other Inhabitants of the Borough of Huntingdon *in the County of* Huntingdon, *was preſented to the Houſe, ſetting forth,*

That the Corporation of King's-Lyn *have lately demanded the Corporation of the Fens to take away the navigable Saſs at the* Hermitage *near* Erith, *and the Sluice at* Denver *Dam, which will deprive the Petitioners of the Benefit of* New Bedford *River, being* 20 *Miles in Length, made at the great Charge of the Corporation of the Fens, whereby the ſaid Town and Country have a certain and advantageous Navigation; and praying, that the ſaid navigable Saſs, Sluices, and River may be continued for the Service of the Country.*

Ordered,

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

A Petition of the Land Owners and Inhabitants of the Hundreds of Marſhland, with the Towns of Wiggenhall *and Villages adjacent, in the County of* Norfolk, *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth,* *Marſhland Petition for the Bill.*

That the Petitioners are Owners of near 40,000 *Acres of profitable Lands there, which are ſubject on the one Side to Inundations from the Sea, and on the other Side to the Floods of freſh Waters, which have been preſerved by Banks and Drains made at great Expence to keep out the Sea, and carry the freſh Waters away by the River* Ouſe *to Sea.*

That ſince the Corporation of the Fens, called Bedford *Level, have erected a Dam and Sluice croſs the River* Ouſe *near* Denver *Dam, the ſaid River is become ſilted up, ſo that thereby the Petitioners Drains and Outfalls are become uſeleſs, and many thouſand Acres of their Land and the common Paſtures lye wholly drowned, the common Roads are unpaſſable; and in caſe of any ſudden Inundation, the greateſt Part of the ſaid County is in danger of being loſt. That the ſaid Corporation have alſo by Sluices and Tunnels placed in the* Poedike *Bank (the Petitioners only Defence againſt foreign Waters) cauſed the Waters of the ſaid Level to annoy the Petitioners for divers Years paſt. That theſe Miſchiefs are occaſion'd by the ſaid Dam and Sluice, which ſtop the Flow and Reflow of the Tide* 24 *Miles, which uſed to ſcour the ſaid River and Channels to Sea, and are now choaked up, and cannot be remedied, but by removing the ſaid Dam and Sluice; and praying, that the ſaid Dam and Sluice may be removed by ſuch Means, as may beſt preſerve the Country, and the Petitioners Lands.*

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

Lunæ 11. die Januarij.

A Petition of the Dean and Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of Ely *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That the Corporation of* Lyn Regis *have lately demanded the Corporation of the Fens to take away their Sluice at* Hermitage *near* Erith, *and their Sluice at* Denver *Dam in the County of* Norfolk, *upon a Pretence that they occaſion the ſilting up of* Lyn *Harbour; but the Petitioners are perſuaded, they are the ſole Preſervation of a vaſt Quantity of Lands belonging to* Ely, *and divers other adjacent Towns; and praying, that a bare Suggeſtion of the Corporation of* Lyn *may not obtain that Credit, as to take away thoſe Sluices, which will much prejudice the Petitioners, and will be no Advantage to* Lyn *Harbour, as the Petitioners conceive will be made appear to the Houſe.* *Cathedral of* Ely *petition againſt the Bill.*

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

A Petition of the Inhabitants of the ſeveral Towns of Stoke, Brandon, Mildenhall, *and many adjacent Towns in the County of* Norfolk, Suffolk, *and* Cambridge, *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth,* **Stoke, Brandon, Mildenhall** *Petition for the Bill.*

That by means of the navigable Rivers of Ouſe, Brandon, Mildenhall, *and* Stoke, *the Petitioners have been conſtantly ſupplied with Coals, Fiſh, Salt, and other Merchandiſe, from* Lyn Regis *by Water in Veſſels of great Burden; but ſince the Corporation of the Fens have made a Dam and Sluice croſs the River* Ouſe *at* Denver *below the Mouths of the other Rivers to Seawards, the* Ouſe *and other Rivers are ſo ſilted (by ſtopping the Flow of the* Ouſe *for many Miles) that Boats of the ſmalleſt Burden cannot without great Delay and Danger paſs therein, ſo that the whole Navigation is in danger of being irrecoverably loſt, to the Petitioners Impoveriſhment: And praying, that the ſaid Dam and Sluice may be removed, and the Navigation of the ſaid Rivers reſtored.*

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

Martis 12. die Januarij.

Adventurers petition againſt the Bill.

A Petition of the Governor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the Company of Conſervators of the great Level of the Fens, called Bedford *Level, was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That there is a Bill in the Houſe for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of* King's-Lyn *in the County of* Norfolk: *Which is to remove a Sluice and Dam erected upon the River of* Great Ouſe, *called* Denver *Dam; the Removal of which Dam will tend to the Damage of many hundred Families, and the leſſening the Petitioners Rents, and the hindering of Navigation. The Suggeſtions in the Bill, that the ſaid Dam is prejudicial to the Navigation of the ſaid Port being falſe, their Inconveniency ariſing from other Cauſes, as the Petitioners doubt not to prove; and praying, that they may be heard by Council at the Bar of the Houſe againſt the paſſing of the ſaid Bill.*

Ordered,
That the Petitioners be heard by their Council at the Bar of this Houſe, upon the ſecond Reading of the ſaid Bill.

Ordered,
That Council for the ſaid Bill be then alſo heard.

Ordered,
That the ſaid Bill be read a ſecond time upon this Day ſevennight.

Towns bordering on the South *Level petition for the Bill.*

A Petition of the Owners and Occupiers of Land in the ſeveral Towns of Northwold, Methwold, Feltwell, Hockwell *and* Wilton, Brand, Wainsford, Lakenheath, Euſwell, Iſleham, Wallington, Barton *and* Mildenhall, *in the Counties of* Norfolk *and* Suffolk, *and within the* South *Part of the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level, was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That the Corporation of the ſaid Fen Lands had large Shares of the Petitioners Lands ſet out to themſelves, as a Recompence for their draining and preſerving the Reſidue, which ought to be done by proper Banks and Drains; but the ſaid Corporation have not maintained their Banks and Drains, ſo that the Petitioners Lands are generally drowned, and in a worſe Condition than they were before the ſaid Undertaking, to their great Impoveriſhment. That the Petitioners have made many Complaints to the ſaid Corporation for Relief in the Premiſes, but they being by Act of Parliament of* 15. Car. 2. *made ſole Commiſſioners of Sewers for the ſaid Level, and concerned in particular Intereſt, the Petitioners can have no Relief, nor does any Appeal lye but to this Houſe: And praying, that the Commiſſioners, who have no Intereſt with the Corporation, may be joined with them in Authority, according to their Proportion of Lands in the ſaid Level.*

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

Luna 25. die Januarij.

Univerſity of Cambridge *Petition for the Bill.*

A Petition of the Chancellor, Maſters, and Scholars of the Univerſity of Cambridge *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That the Navigation from the Town of* King's-Lyn *to the ſaid Univerſity is of ſuch Importance, that they cannot reaſonably ſubſiſt without it, and ſeveral Laws have been made for its Preſervation; but the Petitioners are under great Apprehenſion of loſing the Benefit of the ſaid Navigation, which Miſchief is ſolely imputed to the Works of the Drainers of* Bedford *Level: And praying, that they may be freed from the great Inconveniencies they apprehend themſelves liable unto.*

Ordered,
That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

A Pe-

A Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Council of the Town and Borough of Cambridge *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That the ſaid Town and Parts adjacent heretofore have been well ſupplied with Coals, Fiſh, Salt, and all other Sorts of foreign Merchandiſe, at reaſonable Rates, from the Port of* King's-Lyn, *by the Rivers of* Great Ouſe *and* Grant, *in Veſſels and Barges of great Burden; but by reaſon of a Dam and Sluice erected at* Denver *croſs the* Ouſe *by the Adventurers for draining* Bedford *Level, the ſaid Navigation is much prejudiced, not only by Delay in paſſing through the ſaid Sluice, but alſo for that the* Ouſe *from that Sluice to Sea is choaked up, that ſmall Veſſels cannot paſs therein without great Danger, Delay, and Charge; and the Navigation is very likely to be ſuddenly loſt, if not prevented: And praying, that all Obſtructions to the ſaid Navigation may be removed, whereby their uſual Trade and Commerce may be reſtored.*

Borough of Cambridge Petition for the Bill.

Ordered,

That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

A Petition of the Deputy-Lieutenants, Juſtices of the Peace, and Grand Jury, at the Quarter-Seſſions for the County of Huntingdon, *and of other the Gentlemen Freeholders and Inhabitants of the ſaid County, was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth, That the Corporation of* King's-Lyn *have lately demanded the Corporation for draining* Bedford *Level, to take away their navigable Saſs erected at the* Hermitage *near* Erith, *and their Sluices at* Denver *Dam, which will deprive the Petitioners of the Uſe of the Hundred-foot River, whereby the Petitioners Towns and Countries have a far quicker and more certain Navigation than before the Draining, to the great Advancement of Trade and Commerce: And praying, that the ſaid navigable Saſs and Sluices may be continued, and thereby the Navigation of the ſaid Hundred-foot River will be preſerved.*

County of Huntingdon Petition againſt the Bill.

Ordered,

That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

Martis 26. die Januarij.

A Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common-Council, and principal Inhabitants of the Borough of Thetford *in the County of* Norfolk *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth——That by means of the great River* Ouſe, *and the navigable Rivers of* Brandon *and* Thetford, *conſtant Commerce hath been maintained between* Thetford *and the ſeveral Towns adjacent, and the Port of* King's-Lyn; *from whence they have been ſupplied with all Sorts of Merchandize, and made Returns of their Corn and Grain in Barges, and other Veſſels of good Burden; but by reaſon of a Dam ſet down croſs the River* Ouſe *near* Denver *by the Adventurers of draining* Bedford *Level, before the Mouth of the ſaid Rivers of* Brandon *and* Thetford *the Stream is ſo ſtopped, and the River ſo ſilted, that the ſmalleſt Veſſels cannot paſs without great Delay and Danger, and the whole Navigation is in great Danger of being loſt: And praying, that the ſaid Dam and Sluice may be removed, as the only Means to reſtore and preſerve the ſaid Navigation.*

Thetford *Petition for the Bill.*

Ordered,

That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

A Petition of the Owners and Occupiers of Land in the South *Level or Diviſion of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level, was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth——That the Adventurers for draining the ſaid Level of the Fens, in Conſideration of large Shares allotted them, did oblige themſelves to drain the ſaid Level, without Prejudice to Navigation in the Rivers of* Ouſe, Grant, Mildenhall, *and* Stoke: *But the ſaid Adventurers have erected a Dam and Sluice croſs the* Ouſe *at* Denver, *below the Mouths of all the ſaid Rivers; which hath ſo weaken'd their Stream, that they are all ſilted, and the Navigation much prejudic'd,*

Landholders in the South *Level Petition for the Bill.*

and the Petitioners Lands lye drowned moſt Part of the Year; and very little Improvement is made, unleſs in thoſe Lands purchaſed by partitular Members of the Adventurers. That the Petitioners have made ſeveral Complaints to the ſaid Adventurers, but can have no Relief, nor Appeal from them, in regard they are by Act of Parliament appointed Commiſſioners of Sewers for governing the ſaid Level, and the Works thereof, excluſive of all others: And praying, that other Perſons having Lands in the ſaid Level, may, according to their Proportions, be joined with the ſaid Adventurers for governing the ſaid Level.

Ordered,

That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

Jovis 28. die Januarij.

Bury St. Edmond's *Petition for the Bill.*

A Petition of the Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and Common-Council of the Town and Borough of Bury St. Edmond's *in the County of* Norfolk *was preſented to the Houſe and read, ſetting forth——That the Inhabitants of the ſaid Borough, and Parts adjacent, have hitherto been well ſupplied with Coals, Fiſh, and all Sorts of foreign Commodities, from the Port of* King's-Lyn, *at reaſonable Rates, by the navigable Rivers of* Great Ouſe *and* Mildenhall; *but by reaſon of a Sluice and Dam erected by the Adventurers for draining of the Fens of* Bedford *Level, croſs the River* Ouſe *near* Denver, *the Streams of the ſaid River are become ſilted, ſo that ſmall Boats cannot paſs to and fro without much Danger and Delay, to the great Prejudice of the ſaid Navigation, and the Trade and Commerce of the Petitioners: And praying, that the ſaid Obſtructions to the ſaid Navigation may be removed.*

Ordered,

That the ſaid Petition do lye upon the Table, until the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk* be read a ſecond time.

The Bill read a ſecond time.

The Council attending to be heard for and againſt the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk*, they were called in, and the Bill was read a ſecond time; and the Council for and againſt the Bill were heard, and divers Witneſſes were examin'd on both Sides.

Proofs of *Lyn* at the Bar of the Houſe of Commons, *Jan.* 28.

Mr. Serj. *Wright*, Mr *Dobbins*, } Council for the Bill.

It was admitted, that draining the Fens was by all Acts and Ordinances limited to be done without Prejudice to Navigation of the Port of Lyn, *and Rivers belonging thereto.*

Witneſſes for the Bill.

It was proved,	*Proved by*
1. That before the Dam and Sluice was erected, the Tide flow'd 24 Miles higher than now they do, in the deep Rivers of *Ouſe*, *Grant*, *Stoke*, and *Mildenhall*.	*Richard Allen.* *Francis Lord.*
2. That the Tides are wholly ſtopp'd out of thoſe Rivers by the Flood-gates.	*William Wendy.*
3. That *the Sole or Foundation of the Sluice is raiſed, and ſtands above eight Foot higher than the Bottom of the old River* (upon which it is placed) whereby *ſo much Weight of Water is loſt.*	Dr. *Brady.* Gaug'd in Preſence of four Members of this Houſe.
4. That the Waters in the deep River of *Ouſe*, formerly 150 Feet wide, (are now confin'd to three Tunnels or Arches, each not exceeding 18 Feet Water-way) which together with the large Indraught of the Tides received into the above-mentioned Rivers twice every 24 Hours, by conſtant Motion in one Body, did formerly ſcour and keep thoſe Rivers and the Channel to Sea deep and open.	*J. Fincham*, Eſq; Dr. *Brady.*

5. That

A PLAN
and DESCRIPTION of the FENNS

and other Grounds within the ISLE of ELY.
and in the Counties of LINCOLN NORTHAMP:
HUNTINGTON, CAMBRIDGE, SUFFOLK & NORFOLK.

Bounded by Marshland on the North. —
Sh. River Welland & ye high grounds of Northton.W
the high grounds of Huntington & Cambr: Sh. S
And the high grounds of Suffolk & Norfolk E

Copied by T: Badeslade, 1724. | Survey'd by W^m. Hayward, A.D. 1604.

PART OF HUNTINGTON SHIRE

PART OF CAMBRIDGE SHIRE

PART OF SUFFOLK

Aldreth Cawsey

Aldenbury

Spaldwick

Hunchingbrook

London Way

Cunnington

Holm

Holme Lode

CUNNINGTON FENN

Wood Walton

Witlesey Meere

HUNTINGTON

Upwood

Hill Lode

Berry

Ramsey

St. Ives

Warboys

Hollgwell

Stanton

Drayton

Somersham

Pidley

Ramsey Meere

WARBOIS FENN

Benwick

Benwick Meere

Bisseling FENN

Heanes

Ouse Bar

Bluntsham

Colne

Swaffey

Over

Over Fenn

West Fenn

Erith

West Water

Chatteris

SUTTON and CHATTERIS FENNS

Willingham

Middle Fenn

Erith Causey, calld the DELPHS

Sutton Lode

Cap Lode

BYALL FENN

Rampton

St. Myles Sandys Several

Audry

Sutton

Haddenham

Wicham

Willberton

BYALL FENN als. Balstaff Moore

Wingford

Coveny

Wickford

GRUNTY FENN

COMON FEN

Ely Holme

Downham

W. FENN

Cottenham

Harleston

Chesterton

CAMBRIDGE

Shelford

Foulmere

Milton

Ditton

Waterbeach

COTTENHAM FENN

Willberton Fenn

Stretham

Hinton

Feversham

Ferry Denny Abby

Thetford

ELY

Grant Au:

Waterbeach COMMON

Stretham Meere

Wittleford Bridge

Fulbern

Upwear

Heach Lode

Bottesham

Swaffham Grounds

Spinney Abby

Soam Meere

Soam Cawsey

Prick Willow

Wilbraham Parva

Swaffham Bulbeck

Mickin

Soam

Soam Field

BURNT FENN

Wilbraham Magna

Reach

WHELPMO

Burwell

Sharpy ELY FENN

Linton

Lanward

Fordham

ISLEHAM FENN

Isleham

Common voc. the Hollos

Nildenhall R.

Redmoor House

Ashley

Undley

Lacking Heath COMMOS FENN

Undley Common

Lacking Heath

Wangford FENN

Wangford

Earswell

Werlington

Milldenhall

Berton Hill

Brandon

Islingham

Lackford

EXPLANATION.

The high grounds in the Fenns, are coloured Green, to distinguish them from the Fenns.
The Sea Banks, Fenn Banks & Banks between wch the Waters have passage to Sea, are colured Red.
The Meers, Rivers and Drains are coloured Blew.
The Highland that Bound the Fenns are coloured with a light Green.

N.B. A.A.A. is the old Course the Ouse had when the Outfall by Wisbeach was good.
A.B. the Cutt made when that Outfall decay'd to send the Waters of Great Ouse into Ouse Parva and so by LYNN to Sea.
The Division between the Fenns, the Province of Marthland, Wisbeach Hundred & Holland is coloured Yellow.

T. Badeslade Delin:

PART OF DEEPING FENN

HOLLAND within LINCOLN SHIRE

PART OF NORFOLK

PETERBOROUGH

Great FENN

THE NEW LEAM

WITTLESEY FENN

WITTLESEY Tuff FENN

RANSON MOOR

The Leam HORSE MOOR

STONY FENN

WEST MOOR

LONDONERS FENN

BLACK MERE HALE

WILLOWBY FENN

WHELPMOOR

WISBEACH HIGH FENN

WALDERSEY

LAND

Marmond FENS

Needham FENN

Marshland Fenn

Magdalen Fenn

DOWNHAM & STOW FENN

HELGATE DENVER FENN

WILTON & HOCKWOLD Vic. SEA FENN

The House in the several FENNS

Glen flu:

Welland flu:

Neve flu:

Kings delf

Nene flu:

Wisbeach

Spalding

Crowland

Great Postand

Thorney

Deeping

Longstaff

E. Deeping

Creek in the Fenns

The Abby

Pinchbeck

Surfleet

Gosberton Mill

Moscott Bridge

Cubitto

Uffeton

Moulton

Quaplode

Clow

Holbeck

Scott

Harrington Hall

Salt Marshes

Sutton

Sea Bank

Tidd St. Giles

Newton

Leverington

Walton

Walpole

MARSH

Terrington

Tilney

Clench Walton

Old Lynn

St. Germans

St. Peters

Walpole

Emneth

Walsoken

Elme

Needham

Shrewsnd

Welney R.

Welney

Downham

Denver

Fordham

Hoxham

Wrapham Abby

Wretton

Stoke

Feltwell

Methwould

Hockwold

Wilton

Norwold

Oxborow

Beauchamp Well

Mundford Bridge

Ickborow

Wreting

Brandon

Helgay

Southery

Stoke River

Brandon River

Ouse parvus

Lynn River

Baywood

Watlington

Stow Bridge

Magdalen Bridge

Stilton

Yaxley

Paston

Clinton

Holm Leede

Ramsey Crosted

Newestide

Sword Delf als Kenwood Delf

Kings Delf

Bishops Dike

Wittlesey Dyke

Plant Water

Norwold Green

Coldham Bank

Elm Leam

Old Chain

Mary Fen

Denver Lode

Old Bedford Drain

Sutton Drain

Sea Bank

Salt Marshes

Lutton

Sutton

Tidd St. Mary

Fish Bar

Wisbeach Outfall

Cross Bank

Hall Gate

Lutton Sewer

Gold Dike

Wide Drain

Sutton Fenn

Wisbeach Fenn

Creek

Clows

Mary Drain

Sluice Drain

Lattersington Drain

Vinegar Drain

Sluice Lode

Thorney Drain

Knight Dike

Barcam Moor

Scott Lode

Gold Dike

Knary Creek

Fenn Lode

Hall Gate

Mary Drain

Sutton Drain

Lutton

Sea Bank

Terrington

Tilney

Clench Walton

Old Lynn

Wisbeach Cut

Cross Bank

Fish Bar

Walton

Walpole

Emneth

Walsoken

Elme

Needham

Shrewsnd

Welney R.

Welney

Downham

Denver

Fordham

Hoxham

Wrapham Abby

Wretton

Stoke

Feltwell

Methwould

Hockwold

Wilton

Norwold

Oxborow

Beauchamp Well

Mundford Bridge

Ickborow

Wreting

Brandon

Helgay

Southery

Stoke River

Brandon River

Ouse parvus

Lynn River

Baywood

Watlington

Stow Bridge

Magdalen Bridge

Stilton

Yaxley

Paston

Clinton

Holm Leede

Ramsey Crosted

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Hockwold

Wilton

Norwold

Oxborow

Beauchamp Well

Mundford Bridge

Ickborow

Wreting

Brandon

Helgay

Southery

Stoke River

Brandon River

Ouse parvus

Lynn River

Baywood

Watlington

Stow Bridge

Magdalen Bridge

A Scale of Miles

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

T. Parker Sculp.

A PLAN
and DESCRIPTION of the FENNS

and other Grounds within the ISLE of ELY.
and in the Counties of LINCOLN NORTHAMP:
HUNTINGTON, CAMBRIDGE, SUFFOLK & NORFOLK.

Bounded by Marshland on the North. — The River Welland & ye high grounds of Northton.W
The high grounds of Huntington & Cambr: Sh. S
And the high grounds of Suffolk & Norfolk E

Copied by T: Badeslade 1724. | Surveyd by Wm Hayward A.D. 1604.

PART OF HUNTINGTON SHIRE

PART OF CAMBRIDGE SHIRE

PART OF SUFFOLK

EXPLANATION.

The high grounds in the Fenns, are coloured Green, to distinguish them from the Fenns.
The Sea Banks, Fenn Banks & Banks between wch the Waters have passage to Sea, are colured Red.
The Meers, Rivers and Drains are coloured Blew.
The High Land that Bound the Fenns are coloured with a light Green.

N.B. A.A.A. is the old Course the Ouse had when the Outfall by Wisbeach was good.
A.B. the Cutt made when that Outfall decay'd to send the Waters of Great Ouse into Ouse Parva and so by LYNN to Sea.
The Division between the Fenns, the Province of Marthland, Wisbeach Hundred & Holland is coloured Yellow.

T. Badeslade Del.in:

PART OF DEEPING FENN
HOLLAND within LINCOLN SHIRE
MARSHLAND
PART OF NORFOLK
PETERBOROUGH
BOROUGH Great FENN
THE NEW LEAM
WISBEACH HIGH FENN
WALDERSEY
The Leam HORSE Stony MOOR
WITTLESEY FENN
WITTLESEY Turf FENN
RANSON MOOR
WEST MOOR
LONDONERS FENN
BLACK MERE HALE
WILLOWBY FENN
WHELPMOOR
Marshland Fenn
Magdalen Fenn
DOWNHAM & STOW FENN
MELGATE DENVER FENN
MARMOND FEN
Needham FENN
Crowland Great Postland
Glen flu:
Welland flu:
Spalding
Wisbeach
Denver
Downham
Fordham
Roxham
Watlington
LYNN REGIS
Stoke
Osborow
Mundford Bridge
Ickborow
Thorney
Elme
Walton
Walpole
Terrington
Quaplode
Holbeck
Sea Bank
Salt Marshes
Sutton
Luttons
Gedberton Mill
Surfleet
Moscott Bridges
Cubitts
Deeping
Longstaff
E. Deeping
Creek in the Fenns
The Abby
Pinchbeck
Vinegar Hill
Singlecote
Dousdale
Great Sheepie
Thieves Chapple
Knarr Tree
Gold Dike
Luttons Sewer
Hall Gate
Sutton Fenn
Wisbeach Fenn
Hall
Scott
Harrington Hall
Sea Bank
Sutton Drain
Sluice Drain
Tidd St Giles
Tidd St Mary
Newton
Leverington
Coldham
Coldham Bank
Elm Leam
Emneth
Wakeken
Walton
Cow Hills
Hobhole
Sluice
Tidal Bar
Tidal Gate
Sluice Drain
Leverington Sluice
Newton Sluice
Wisbeach Outfall
Lead Dike
Green Dike
West Drain
Walpole Gate
Walpole Cross Keys
The Fences
St John
St Lawrence
High Dike
Terrington
Tilney
Tilney Fen
Sea Bank
Brights Gate
St Marys
Magdalen
St Germans
St Peters
Clench Warton
Old Lynn
Lynn River
Baywood
Seches
Magdalen Bridge
Cross Bridge
Cross
Stoke River
Braundon River
Ouse parva
Wretton
Beauchamp Well
Mundford Bridge
Ickborow
Norwold
Methwould
Feltwell
Hockwold
Wilton
Meeting
Brandon
The House in the sewer at FENNS
WILTON & HOCKWOLD Vac. SEA FENN
Stilton
Vaxley
Paston
Clinton
Stand Ground
Facett
Standground Sluice
Holm Lode
Kings delf
Ramsey Crested
Newstide
Sword Delf als Kenwood Delf
Kings Delf
Bishops Dike
Wittlesey Dike
Neme flu:
Plant Water
Norwold Green
Marsh
Doddington
Bisseling FENN
Hony
Stony FENN
Old Chain
Denver Lode
Welney R.
Welney
Sandy Weir
Mare Fenn
Mare Lode
Creek Lode
Littleport Chair
Littleport Street House
Southery
Helgay
Old Lynn
Cleaves Dike
Cantley Dike
Mare Lode
Shrewing
Upwell
Outwell
Bramtree Hall
Hungam Dike
Nordelph
Nordelph Drain
Old Podike
Channey Lode
Wiggs
Brook
Wiggs Head
Ford Dike
Jobbs Lode
Needham Drain
Needham Bridge
Denver Sluice
Denver Bridge
Salters Lode
Ship Lode
Nordelph Fen
Delph
Downham Bridge
Tilney Fen End
Tilney Wide
Tilney Lode
Gold Dike
Knarr Tree
Sutton Fenn
Wisbeach Fen
Hall Gate
Cross
Clows
Clow
Holbeck
Salt Marshes
Sea Bank

Proved by

5. That ſince this Stop, the great River and Channel to Sea are ſilted and grown up even *higher than the Soal of the Sluice*, whereby the great Stream is become ſhallow and weak, and inſufficient to maintain the ancient Channel. —— —— — *Edmond Quaſh. William Fuller.*

6. That the Sluice is conſtantly ſhut at ſuch Seaſons of the Tide when moſt neceſſary for Paſſage many Hours, ſometimes Days and Weeks *; and Boats have been unladen, and carried over the Dam —— *Richard Allen. Francis Lord.*

7. That the old Rivers above the Sluice are choaked up with Weeds and Mud, and almoſt unpaſſable. —— —— —— *The ſame.*

8. That where large Keels and Barges were formerly uſed, none but *flat Boats or Lighters can now paſs.* —— —— —— *The ſame.*

9. That the Channels to Sea are ſo grown up, that Ships of ſmalleſt Burden cannot paſs unleſs at high Spring-Tides, *where large Ships uſed to ſail at Neip-Tides.* —— —— *Edmond Quaſh. William Fuller.*

10. That before the Sluices were erected, when the Tides had their ancient natural Courſe up thoſe deep Rivers, which were thereby filled with vaſt Quantities of Water, the Ebb at *Lenne* gave way, and was run off two Hours at leaſt before it fell back in the Place where the Sluices ſtand, and left the Banks and flat Sands (pretended to be the Cauſe of the Miſchiefs) bare on both Sides the deep Channel: That when thoſe Waters, ſo far run up into the Country, return, being followed by the Freſhes every twelve Hours, they fell with ſuch Weight and Force in a ſtrong and rapid Stream, that they cleared the River and Harbour from the Sands brought in by the Tides *before they could fall and ſettle.* —— —— *Edmond Quaſh.*

11. That the Hundred-foot River pretended an Equivalent; bears no manner of Proportion for Depth or Breadth with the old Rivers, being cut on riſing Ground but five or ſix Feet deep.—— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— *J. Fincham*, Eſq; and Dr. *Brady*; and acknowledged by Mr. *Ruſſel* of the Corporation to be but 6 Feet deep.

And is but Part of, and divided from the old Stream of the River *Ouſe* that formerly fell by the Hermitage. —— —— *The Map.*

12. That the Damages that may happen by removing the Sluices, can affect only Part of the *South* Level, which would have *no Damage if imbank'd*; and there is ſufficient Earth for banking againſt the River *Ouſe*. —— —— —— —— Mr. *Fincham.*

And where ſuch Earth cannot be had againſt *Mildenhall* and *Brandon* Rivers, it may be brought by Boat from the contiguous hard Land with little Charge. —— —— —— *Tho. Wright*, Eſq;

13. That the Lands in Marſhland and *Clack-cloſe* Hundred and Parts adjacent damaged, and which now and for divers Years have laid drowned by the Sluices, are far more valuable than the Lands in the *South* Level pretended to be preſerved by the Sluices. —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— Mr. *Fincham.* Dr. *Brady.*

14. That great Part of the *South* Level is by the Sluices much impaired in Value, and generally in worſe Condition than before they were erected.—— —— —— —— —— Proved by the ſame, and *Will. Wendy*, and by the Petitions from thouſands of the Land Owners of the *South* Level.

Proofs of the Adventurers at the Bar of the Houſe of Commons, *Jan.* 28.

Sir *Thomas Powis*, Sir *Barthol. Shore*, } Council for the Adventurers againſt the Bill.

John Tilney—Knew all the Rivers before the firſt Sluices: Both Sluices, old and new, ſtopped the Tides——*That between the Sluice and* German's *Bridge, the River and Navigation is as good as it has been in any time theſe forty Years.* *Witneſſes againſt the Bill.*

* The Land-Floods deſcending the Hundred-foot Drain in Winter-time, have kept the Sluice-doors ſhut for three Weeks together.

Thomas Harvey—Knew the Sluice for 30 Years: This laſt Sluice is better for Navigation and the Paſſage of Boats, and more convenient; but cannot ſay the Waters are more united.

William Hookham— * *The River from the Sluice to* St. Germans *as deep as formerly, hard Gravels appearing in the Bottom.*

William Hales— * *That the Rivers to* Cambridge *are as deep as ever they were,* and large Keels may ſtill go to *Lambs-ware* as far and well as ever they did: * *Can have no Water in dry Times, but by penning with freſh Doors; and if removed, no Paſſage for Boats.*

Richard Ruſſel—The new Sluice built about 12 Years ſince: The Tides often flow up the Hundred-foot River about 14 or 15 Miles——The River *Ouſe* above the Sluice 10 or 12 Feet deep——The Hundred-foot near the Sluice hath 20 Feet Water, was plummed *Monday* was ſe'nnight: But acknowledges that the Hundred-foot River is generally not above ſix Feet deep upward—— There are more Watermen now than ever.

John Vipin— * *All Goods are cheaper carried to* St. Ives *than formerly,* (*viz.*) before Coals carried at ſix Shillings *per* Chaldron, now three Shillings *per* Chaldron——If the Sluice be removed, the *South* Level will be drowned——He is Owner of a Lot in *Sutton*, formerly worth but ten Shillings *per Ann.* now worth 50 Shillings *per Ann.*——Owns that at this time the *South* Level is drowned.

Robert Spenner—Conceives the Dam preſerves the *South* Level: If removed, ſome Scores of Houſes will be deſtroy'd; but ſays the Houſes ſtand on the Banks, which would be uninhabited—— Some 1000 of Acres advantaged by the Sluice.

Mr. *Merrit*—That he made a Draught of the Sea Shores and Sands at the Entrance of *Lyn-haven*, about five Years ſince: That he ſounded the Rivers *Monday* ſe'nnight, where he was directed, and deliver'd a Note and account of Depths and Diſtances——That the River two Miles above *Lyn* towards *St. Germans* is a Mile broad.

Thomas Dawes—That he did help to remove the Banks inward, whereby the River was widen'd five or ſix Poles in Breadth, and about twenty Poles in Length below *Lyn* at Captain *Thousbye*'s Bank.

Francis Childes—Knows the widening the River againſt *Kenwick* Houſe toward *Germans* above *Lyn* ſeven Poles broad, twenty Poles long——* *The River is as navigable now as 40 Years ago*——The new Sluice is better than the old one; kept out the Tides better, and is wider——The Tides commonly run 16 Miles up *Bedford* River.

Thomas Mott— * *That there is generally eight Foot Water from the Sluice nine Miles towards* Lyn; but from *Germans* to *Lyn*, no more than two or three Foot deep at Low-water, the Banks being wider than formerly——But knows no Alteration of Banks for 20 Years; hath been a Pilot ſo long——The Paſſage in that Part at three or four Foot dangerous.

Mr. *Beverly*—The River about ten Miles from *Lyn*, in the broadeſt Part, is nine Furlongs wide; and from *Comonſtath Yard Lyn* to *Comonſtath* at *Weſt Lyn*, is 160 Yards wide.

Thomas Robotham—Some Houſes and Jetties at *Old Lyn* waſhed away and gone with the counter Shore: The Haven thereby made wider ſeveral Yards; but the Haven was deeper then.

William Galloway—Removing the Sluice will drown 20,000 Acres —— The Tide would riſe five or ſix Foot——No good Earth to make up Banks——— Owns the Level is now drowned by the Freſhes——— Some Lands worth 10, 15, 20 *l. per* Acre *per Ann.* would be damaged—— * *Navigation above the Sluice more convenient; and not worſe below*——— 7 or 800 Firkins of Butter weekly ſent up to *London*, bought at the Market at *Denver* Sluice——The Sluice drives the Tides into the Hundred-foot River ten Miles.

John Brett—The Tide goes up the Hundred-foot 14 or 15 Miles: * *The Hundred-foot River is deeper than the* Ouſe——* *If the Sluice be removed, it will ruin the* South *Level.*

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* Theſe Affirmations do not very well agree with the Hiſtory.

——*Cory*—* *More Water comes by* Lyn *than before the Draining*——The *Weſt* Water which formerly went, and ſhould go by *Wisbech*, now deſerted by the River *Ouſe*——Went 30 Years ſince by *Walſoken* Bridge into *Wisbech* River.

——*Hunt*—That 18 Years ago one of the Gates broke at the Sluice, and the Tide ran up nine Miles in the *Ouſe*, and got into the Ditches, and damaged much Land by Salt Water; but ſays, the Water got through the Tunnels into thoſe Ditches, and the Banks were not overflow'd.

After Witneſſes were examin'd on both Sides, the Council withdrew, and the Bill was open'd.

A Motion being made that the Bill be committed, a Debate ariſing thereupon,

Reſolved,

That the Debate be adjourned until *Saturday* ſe'nnight.

Jovis 18. *die Februarij* 9°. *Gul. tertij.*

The Houſe according to the Order of the Day, reſumed the adjourned Debate touching the Commitment of the Bill for the better Preſervation of the Navigation of the Port of *King's-Lyn* in the County of *Norfolk*.

And the Queſtion being put that the Bill be committed,

It paſſed in the Negative.

The Corporation of Adventurers conſiſted of *William* Earl of *Bedford*, Governor.

Bailiffs.

Arthur Earl of *Angleſey*. *Richard* Lord *Gorges*.

Sir *Thomas Chichely*, Chancellor of the Dutchy, and one of his Majeſty's Privy Council; and three others.

Conſervators.

Sir *Thomas Willis*, Baronet.
Sir *John Hewet*, Baronet.
Sir *John Chichley*, Knight.
and Fourteen others.

Sir *Henry North*, Baronet.
Sir *Nich. Pedley*, Knight.
Sir *Thomas Fitch*, Knight;

From what has been ſaid, I leave it to the People intereſſed to judge, whether *Denver* and *Hermitage* Sluices are prejudicial to Navigation or not: It ſhall be the Buſineſs of the next Section, to ſhew whether they are of Uſe to Draining or not.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of the good Condition of the South *Level before* Denver *Sluices were erected for the Benefit of that Level only. - - - and of the bad State of Draining in that Diviſion of the Fens, ſince thoſe Sluices were built - - - with the Reaſons thereof aſſign'd.*

IT doth not appear from any Accounts given of this Country, or from the Tenor of any Preſentments, that the *South* Level was drowned in Summer-time, after the Fen-Waters had Paſſage given them to Sea through *Lenne-haven:* But in Winter during the Time of Land-Floods, Part of this Level was doubtleſs overflow'd, in the ſame manner that all River Meadows then are. However, the Freſhes continued not long over the Face of the Level, but glided off and fell into the Rivers, and were by them convey'd to Sea, in tolerable good time leaving the Land they had floated, enrich'd by the ſubſided Soil they left behind them, with which they came ſo impregnated from the high Countries, that they were and are called the White Waters. Thus the Waſhes between the Old and New *Bedford* River are at this Day more valuable than any other Part of the Fens, made ſo by the White Waters having their Paſſage between their Banks. And

That this was the good Condition of the *South* Level at the time the Undertaking for a General Draining commenced, I ſhall fully prove in this Section.

For tho' after the Outfall for the Fen-Waters by *Wisbech* was loſt, (ſee how, *Sect.* 3.) Part of the Fens became totally drowned, until a new Cut was made from *Littleport-chair* to *Rebeck*, (ſee from *A* to *B* in *Hayward*'s Map) and the Waters of *Great Ouſe* were let down this new Cut, and had their Courſe given them through *Lenne-haven* to Sea; yet afterwards the Land and Sea Waters did by degrees grind and wear this Channel (heretofore very narrow) ſo wide and deep, that it became very capable of conveying to Sea all the Fen-Waters that were led by Drains or Rivers to this Courſe, as were thoſe of the *South* Level: but the Drains of the Middle and *North* Level having been made to convey their Waters into *Wisbech* River, when that Outfall was perfect, they were of no uſe to carry the Fen-Waters into *Lyn* River, after *Wisbech* Channel decay'd. Therefore theſe two Levels, for want of proper Outfalls to Sea, were very much incommoded with Waters. And the Commiſſioners of Sewers having by their ordinary Power no Authority to make new Drains, and the Country differing with them, and with one another, about making new Works to convey the Fen-Waters to the new Outfall by *Lyn*, the ſaid Fens lay for the moſt Part ſurrounded; and therefore at length the Commiſſioners of Sewers for thoſe Parts exhibited a Petition, (*June* 19. 1618.) to the Lords of the Privy-Council, ſhewing theſe Inconveniencies, and deſir'd for Prevention of farther Differences and Delays, that their Lordſhips would order one of the Clerks of the Council to take a View with them of the Outfalls, who, as a Perſon indifferent, might inform their Lordſhips of the Feaſibleneſs of the Work of Draining, and of the fitteſt Means to effect it.

Hereupon their Lordſhips appointed Sir *Clement Edmonds*, one of their Clerks, to accompany the Commiſſioners; which he did the next *Auguſt*.——And after they had taken a general View of the Fens and their Outfals, he made his Report to thoſe Lords the 29th of *September* after.

So much of his Report as relates to the River *Ouſe*, and to the *South* Level, is as followeth.

Sir Clement Edmonds *his Report of the State of the* South *Level.*

" *The River* Ouſe *coming along by the Town of* Bedford, Huntingdon, *and* " St. Ives, *and ſo paſſing down to his Outfall at* Lyn, *is a goodly fair River through-* " *out; and from below* Ely *downward runneth with ſuch a Current, that it is ab-* " *ſolutely the beſt Sewer of all that Country.*——*And the Country all along the* " *River Side, both in* Cambridgeſhire *and in the Iſle, being a very rich Soil, and* " *well inhabited, is not otherwiſe much troubled with Waters but in Winter, and* " *in Time of Floods, occaſion'd by the Waters being ſtopped between* Huntingdon " *and* Ely *by Weeds, Weres, Hards,* &c. *and by the River being made ſhallow*

" *againſt* Ely, *as in other Parts by Gravels and Fords, which ought to be removed*
" *for the readier Paſſage of the Water in Time of Floods*, &c.

That Weeds, Weers, *&c.* were great Obſtacles to Draining, and the Means of drowning the Country, innumerable Laws of Sewers teſtify.——But for Brevity Sake, I'll only inſtance the following Ordinances and Laws made at *Ely*, *April* 27. 1574. *Weeds, Weers, and Gravels, the chief Cauſe of Land-Floods drowning the Fens.*

" *Richard* by Divine Providence Biſhop of *Ely*—*Andrew Pearce*, Dean of " *Ely*, &c. To all manner of Perſons having any Weers, Stamps, or Annoy- " ſance within any Rivers, Lodes, Streams, or common Sewers within the " Hundred of *Ely*, &c. ſendeth greeting——Commanding you, on the Queen's " Behalf, to remove the ſame, *&c.* upon the Pains expreſſed. Witneſs our " Hands 27. *April*, 16. *Eliz.*

" Every Weer from *Erith* Bridge to *Harrimer* Weer, to be in Breadth in the " Weer Mouth 22 Feet——Every Weer to have a Door the Breadth of 14 Feet " ——From *Harrimer* to *Prieſt-houſes*, every Weer Mouth to be 24 Feet, on " Pain of forfeiting 5 *l.* Alſo that no Perſon having Weers and Stamps, make " any Dam to hinder the Water-Courſe.

" Alſo when great Floods and Abundance of Water ſhall chance, then every " Owner of Stamps or Weers to pluck up one Hurdle of every Door, on Pain " of forfeiting 5 *l.*

" That all Streams, Sewers, *&c.* be cut and ſheered three times a Year: The " firſt time before the laſt Day of *May*—the ſecond before the laſt Day of *June* " —the third before the laſt Day of *July*—for every time omitting to forfeit 40 " Shillings—on Refuſal the Town to cut it—on the Town's Neglect, they to loſe " likewiſe——Theſe Laws ſhew, that Weeds, Weers, *&c.* were very prejudi- cial to Draining. And therefore the Lord Chief Juſtice *Popham*, in his Scheme for Draining, *Anno* 1605. provided againſt all Weers, Stamps, Hards, *&c.*

Mr. *Atkins* is alſo full of Complaints againſt theſe Prejudices——He ſays, the *Hardes above* Ely *are in narrow Parts of the River, whereby they very much hinder the Land Floods in their Paſſage*, eſpecially thoſe about *Stretham*, which of all others are the worſt, being Gravels laid over the River on Purpoſe by Cart to fetch their Fodder and Hay out of the Fens. Theſe Gravels being three or four in Number do great harm to Draining, ſaith he; and therefore the whole Way of *Ouſe* from *St. Ives* to *Littleport* ought to be cleared of theſe Im- pediments, and then the Country would not be drowned: For he ſaith, a little above *Erith* Bridge, on the *South* Side of *Ouſe*, beginneth a good Bank, which leadeth thence by the River Side over *Cote-ward*, and thence turneth *Southerly* toward *Over* Town. 'Tis an adjoiſted Bank, and is diſtreſſed by the Floods of *Ouſe*, they riſing commonly three Feet above the Soil of *Over*-Fens; becauſe at *Over* there is a very ſtrait Weer kept, and becauſe it is the uſual Place of Paſſage croſs all manner of Stops be made to ſhorten the Way.

From *Overcote* to the *White Houſe* in *Stretham*, the *Ouſe* hath certain Banks for the moſt part on both Sides, which Banks lye not cloſe upon the River, but or- dinarily 18 or 20 Poles between Bank and Bank, and is no where ſtraitned but at the Weers, and a little at *Erith*.

In which Town, at the Bridge, the River is 14 Feet deep, and very broad; the Bridge having 12 Arches, each 12 Feet wide, or more, ſo that the great Floods have ſmall Stay there. Erith *Bridge* 130 *Feet wide.*

Nor would overflow the Meadows, but that the River is much ſtraiten'd be- tween that and *Overcote*, and the Floods much holpen by *Over* Bank ſtopping the Paſſage in the River at the *Cote*, and other like Annoyances between that and *Erith*.

And of Weers, Mr. *Atkins* ſays there were many.——One near the *White Houſe* in *Stretham*, call'd *Pool-Weer*. And below the ſame, within one Stone's Caſt, there's a Gravel laid by *Stretham* Men to cart their Fodder out of *Willow* Fen, a great Cauſe of drowning the Fens.——Near *Harrimere* at the Ferry-Houſe is a Weer ſtraitning the River.——And a little below this, there is a new Houſe built, and by it a Weer.——Between *Overcote* and *Andrey* Cauſeway be five Weers.——He ſaith, that theſe Stops in time of Floods made the Waters of *Ouſe* to run violently into the *Weſt* Water, and alſo through *Over-lode*, which paſſeth down to *Willingham* Meer, and ſo into *Ouſe* again, drowning all the Meadows it

paſſeth through.—And the *Weſt* Water falling over *Erith* Cauſeway did, in *January* 1602. drown *Haddenham Delphs*, otherwiſe ſafe, their Banks being made of Clay mixed.

That Weers, Stamps, Gravels, *&c.* had this fatal Effect of drowning the Country, is already proved; and ſo ſenſible of it was my Lord *Popham*, that in his Project for draining, as is before obſerv'd, all thoſe Impediments were to have been remov'd.

And had they been remov'd, it is the Opinion of moſt Men now, as it was then of the moſt experienc'd Commiſſioners of Sewers, of my Lord *Gorges*, *Weſterdyke*, *Atkins*, and many other the moſt judicious Artiſts, that the *South* Level, with little more imbanking than was at that time, would have been made good Winter Land.

For tho' theſe Impediments to the Paſſage of the Land-Floods made them riſe high, and overflow Land that would have been otherwiſe ſafe; yet the Freſhes did not ſtagnate in the Fens, and ſurround them hurtfully; they were good Summer Land at worſt, and in moderate Years whole Year Grounds.

And this good Condition of the Fens in the *South* Level I ſhall prove,

1. From the Account given of them by the eminent Mr. *Richard Atkins*, when he took the Survey, at the ſame time that Mr. *Hayward* made a Map of the Fens.

2. From the Demand of the firſt Undertakers for draining the Fens, who demanded Part of each Fen, more or leſs, as each was more or leſs ſubject to be overflow'd

3. From the Petitions of the Land-Owners and Inhabitants of the *South* Level to the King, *&c.* at the Time the Undertaking for a general Draining was in Agitation.

4. From the Quantity of Land the preſent Corporation of Adventurers poſſeſs as a Reward for Draining.

And firſt, the Account given by Mr. *Atkins* ſhews, what good State the *South* Level was in above 120 Years ſince.

A. D. 1604. *The State of the* South *Level.*

Relatio R. A. *de Mariſcis & eorum ſtatu*, Anno 1640. *Menſe* Januarii & Februarii.

Roxham —— *Roxham* Fens, a Hamlet of *Deerham.*

Deerham——*Deerham* Fens be about 2 Miles long and ¾ of a Mile broad; they be much drowned, and long, eſpecially the *Weſt* End next *Helgay*, which argueth Default in the River about *Helgay* Bridge.

Weerham—— *Wretton.* *Stoke.* } Fens be about two Miles long, ¾ broad: In all theſe do *Weerham*, *Wretton* and *Stoke* Intercommon.—— The Common next the Field is much of it very good Sheep Paſture. By *Stoke* River ordinary Fen Grounds.

Norwold——

Methwold—— Within theſe Fens the King hath four ſeveral Fens ——— Sir *Ed. Moundford* renewed the Leaſe of theſe Fens when he had yet ſeventeen Years to come therein.—— He gyſted the laſt Summer 800 Beaſts.

The Water in *King's-Dike*, within a Furlong of *Stoke* River, runneth back to *Sothery*, and ſo into *Ouſe*; which in my Opinion argueth ſome great Defect about *Helgay* Bridge.

Feltwell —— Fens be ordinary five Miles deep and two broad; they have a Mow Fen yielding about two Acres to every Houſe.

Helgay —— } 500 Acres of which is ſubject to be drowned, 600 Acres are Im-
Sothery—— } banked.

Hockwold—— } Hath Fens belonging to it of ſeveral Names. — *Tinker*'s Fen very
cum Wilton. } ſmall, on it the Brewhouſe ſtands. — *Fodder* Fen very ſmall. —*Wood* Fen two Furlongs *North* and *South*, four Furlongs *Eaſt* and *Weſt*.— *Mow* Fen and *Horſe* Fen.— *Wood* Fen, and the Cloud, a three Corner Piece, each Side one Mile long. — *Sea* Fen is a common Fen, a feed Fen, and good Grounds one Mile ÷ long, ÷ a Mile broad.———*Cole*'s Fen one Mile long, ÷ broad; it is a feed Fen, *&c.*

Weetinge

Weeting —— Hath certain low Grounds to the *Ouſe* Sideward; which altho' they be not boggy and rotten Fens, yet be they oft ſurcharged with Water, which is as well natural as by overflowing of the *Ouſe*, the Ground itſelf being a wateriſh ſpringing Soil, and very plaſhy; the Earth for the moſt Part gravelly: Theſe Grounds be not above a Mile long.

Brandon—— Hath two large Fens, the *Eaſt* Fen and *Weſt* Fen, about three Mile long; *Brandon* River yieldeth not much Water to hurt the Fens.

Wrangford—— Hath but ſmall Fens.

Lakenheath—— Hath great Fens, wherein be divers Severals; and there belong to it two or three great Sedge Fens, and alſo a common Fen called *Stallonde*, a Piece three corner'd, each Side three Miles long; into this Fen the Lord taketh in many giſt Cattle, *&c.*

Iſewell—— Hath but ſmall Fens.

Mildenhall—— Hath great and good Fens. Theſe Fens about the Rows and ſo to the River be very good Fens, or rather Meadows; the part on the *North* of *Mildenhall*, toward *Iſewell*, be the worſt Fens ſpringing ſpuing Marſh; thoſe Fens are accounted to hold three Miles ſquare. ——— To *Mildenhall* belong two Mow Fens; one of fineſt Stuff, and another of courſe Slover.

Soham—— The Fens of *Soham* be accounted five Miles deep from the Town to the River, and are ſaid to be 30 or 40 Miles about by old *William* —— the Fenreve.

The *Mere* is a Mile broad, and two Miles long. It continually loſeth from the Land, ſo as one about 20 Years taking a Leaſe of Q. *Eliz.* of the Waſte of the *Mere*, another hath ſince that taken another Leaſe between the former and the *Mere*.

There be uſually in *Soham* three Herds of Cattle, each conſiſting of 700 Beaſts.

Iſleham—— Hath three common Fens, whereof that next the Town is beſt; they be not full of Sedge and Reeds, but plain and good feed.

Fordham—— Fens uſed moſt for Turbary, eſpecially the lower Part; a Brook that ſerves two or three Mills by breaking its Banks often drowned theſe Fens.

Wicken—— Fens about 1½ Mile long, but very narrow.

Lanward—— Hath no Fens, and a Piece in the Top of *Burwell* Fens, little above ¼ Mile ſquare.

Burwell—— Hath great and good Fens, extending from *Burwell* Block near *Lanward*, to the *Ouſe*, four Miles deep, three Miles broad.

Swaffham—— Priory hath good Fens, extending from the Town to the *Ouſe* three Miles, and from *Reach-lode* to *Swaffham*-lode is two Miles ½ diſtance. The Fens of *Swaffham* be Imbanked, *viz.* with the Bank of *Reach-lode* from *Reach* to *Upwere*, thence to *Williamſon's Cote*, ſo by *Swaffham-lode* End by the River, thence to *Swaffham* Town by the Lode ſide throughout.

Theſe Banks ſerve to defend the ſudden overflowing of *Grant*, and keep them undrowned when the Fens on each Side be under Water, *&c.*

Reach—— Is a Hamlet of *Swaffham*.

Botteſham—— Hath certain low Grounds, called *Long-meadow Moor*, very good Sheep Paſture, to the Number of 600 or 700 Acres. There are kept upon it, as one told me, ſeven Flocks of Sheep.

The Fens of *Botteſham* lying between *Botteſham-lode* and *Swaffham-lode*, they be much drowned; thoſe next the Town they are for Turbary much. ——— *North-Weſt* of *Botteſham-lode* hath *Botteſham* a very good Fen for Beaſts, which goeth down to *Grant* near *Clayhith*.

Quoy—— Hath but ſmall Fens.

Horningsby —— Be accounted three Miles deep about the Middle, between the Cauſeway and *Clay-hith*; and it is counted two Miles from the Cauſeway to the End of theſe Fens next *Clay-hith*.

A Rill paſſing through theſe Fens, and having no ready Paſſage to any Outfall, but running from Dike to Dike, while it ſerves to fetch their firing, it leaves the Fen often not depaſterable.

Waterbeach — Hath on the Side of the Town next *Grant*, a Fen called *Millar Fen*; whereof that part that is on the *Eaſt* and *South* is reaſonable good

Ground, but very moſſy and bad to the *Northward*; and hath there been uſed for Turf Ground in time paſt.

This Fen is Imbanked round about.

More *North* lies a Fen called *Beach-giſt* Fen, (containing *North* and *South* about three Miles, *Eaſt* and *Weſt* about two Miles) ſome call it *Denny-giſt* Fen, becauſe *Denny* may take in yearly —*Giſt* Beaſt, and as *Bech* Men ſay, they thereby take in many Years ſans numb.

Denny Severals—The Severals of *Denny*, between *Cambridge* and *Stretham* Ferry, lie upon the ſame Level that *Giſt* Fen doth. The Soil a very rank Clay.

Chittering —— Is a Mow Fen, belonging to *Beach* and *Denny*; about two Miles long, ¼ broad.

Landbeach——They have little Fen Grounds, but between the Town and *Denny* be good Sheep Paſture; only by *Chare* Fen Side they have a long Spong of marſh Ground; on the Face thereof it is ſomewhat mooriſh, but underneath a Gravel.

Cottonham —— Hath very good Fens, and great; *viz.* from a Fen by *Aldrich* Cauſeway, called *Surhell*, to *Chittering* Fen on the *Eaſt*.

The Fens of *Cottenham* be at leaſt four Miles long *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, and about 1½ Mile broad, and have the River of *Ouſe* by all the way on the *North*.

Cottonham Fens are all Imbanked, and good Proviſion made to convey their Water, more than any Fen Town thereabout hath: Yet are the Banks in many Places defective, inſomuch as *Chare* Fen lyeth oft and long drowned, and overfloweth into *Chittering*. Becauſe near to the *Cote* in *Stretham*, called the *White-houſe*, there is a Were, called *Pool-were*, 16 Foot deep, *&c.* And below the ſame, within one Stone Caſt, there is a Gravel laid by *Stretham* Men to Cart their Fodder out of *Willow* Fen, where the Water runneth not above two Feet deep; a great Cauſe of drowning of the Fens.

Stretham——There belong to *Stretham* good Fens; *Stretham* Fens, *viz. Willow* Fen, *Tidal* Fen, *&c.* be drowned 16 or 18 Inches on plain Ground, when the Fens on the *Eaſt* of *Grant* between *Wicken* and *Barway* be drowned not above eight or nine Inches ordinarily.

The *Cotes* above *Harrimere* to *Aldrich* Bridge be theſe: 1. *Potters-Cote*, a Mile from *Harrimere*. 2. *Moggs-Cote*, Miles above *Potters*, and is the Ferry-Houſe: Here is a Were ſtraitning the River.

White-Houſe, a Mile above *Moggs*; here is a deep Weer.

Outlaws-Cote, Miles above *White-Houſe*.

A little between this *Cote* there is a new Houſe built, and by it a Weer.

The *Cote* by *Aldrich* Bridge.

Aldrich Bridge conſiſteth of nine Arches, being 14 Feet wide one with another.

Rampton——They have but little Fen-Ground of their own, but only a ſmall Fen call'd *Iram*.

Willingham——They have good Fens and many, namely, *Hemſall*, *Middle Fen*, *New-ditch Fen*, *Weſt Fen*, *Cattox*, *Shelfold*, *Eſtland*, *Middle-hill*.

Above *Aldrich* Cauſeway to the *Weſt* lyeth certain ſeveral Fens, or Low-grounds of *Willingham*; ſeveral of which be defended againſt the *Ouſe*, by a Bank ordinarily ſeven Foot in the Bottom, and three Foot in the Top, made by divers Soils; but moſt commonly of a kind of blackiſh, moultry Clay, contracted in the Moor by the overflowing of *Ouſe*: Theſe Severals lie along by *Ouſe* on the *North*, and extend from *Aldrich* Cauſeway, as high almoſt as *Willingham Cote*, call'd *Willingham Flats*, which is about a Mile above the Cauſeway and a little more; and from thence leaving the *Ouſe*, turn *South* and *Weſt*.

Theſe Banks (eſpecially next *Ouſe*) be very loſe and full of moggy Holes, whereby all the Grounds adjoining be wet and plaſhy, (if not drowned) and not depaſterable in Winter, eſpecially after the firſt Flood or ſwelling of the *Ouſe*.

The Soil of the common Fens of *Willingham* (eſpecially in *Weſt Fen* and *Bart-Fen*) is very good, and the Fens in Nature Land Meadows, except about the *Mere* near the *Ouſe*. The Fens to the Landward be moſt Gravel, and many Pits be there digged for that purpoſe.

Over—— They have, beſides *Weſt* Fen and *Clattox*, wherein they Intercommon with *Willingham*, good Fens, in Nature Meadows, lying over againſt *Erith*. From *Over* to *Erith* leadeth a Bank, dividing the Fens: the Paſtures on the *Weſt* by reaſon of this Bank are longer drowned then they below, towards *Willingham* be; for that as well the overflowing of *Ouſe*, as alſo the Waters from *Long Stanton*, and the Parts adjoining, falling in between *Over* and *Swaſey*, are thereby ſtayed and reſtrained at *Erith*; which, in my Opinion, is a Cauſe why the Water paſſeth in ſo vehemently at *Erith* Bridge to the *Weſt* Water: For below the *Hermitage*, about half a Mile, I have in time of a Flood ſeen the Water on the *North* of *Erith* Cauſeway, higher by a Foot and half than that in the *Delphs*, and it hath broke and run through the Cauſeway into the *Delphs*: which Water again within leſs than a Mile, hath in the *Eaſt* Part of the Cauſeway run over, out of the *Delphs* into *Sutton* Fens, on the *North* Side of the Cauſeway, and ſo by all the way to the very Skirts of *Haddenham* Fields. *Over* hath very good Fens; two Miles broad, and above one Mile long; very Meadows.

A little from above *Erith* Bridge, on the *South* of *Ouſe*, beginneth a good Bank which leadeth thence by the River Side to *Over Cote Weſtward*, and there turneth *Southerly* towards *Over* Town. This Bank is often ſore diſtreſs'd by *Ouſe*, which upon a Flood riſeth above the Level of *Over* Fens adjoining, three Foot commonly: It is an agiſted Bank, and every Man knoweth his Charge thereon.

At *Over Cote* the *Ouſe* is much ſtraitned; *viz.* on the *South* Side by this Bank, and on the *North* by another Bank.

Here is alſo a very ſtrait Were kept, and becauſe it is the uſual Place of Paſſage over, all manner of Stops be made to ſhorten or make narrow the Way.

At this *Cote* there falleth in a Lode from out of *Ouſe*, under *Over* Bank, called *Over-lode*, which I have ſeen run with great Violence, by reaſon of the Stops before ſpoken of in *Ouſe*. This *Lode* paſſeth along on the *Weſt* of the Bank, clean from his Courſe *Southward*, towards *Over* Town, where by the way it falleth through the Bank at two Wooden Bridges in ſuch Quantities, as ſerveth well to drown the good Meadows before ſpoken of; and ſo the Water paſſeth from thence down toward *Willingham* Mere, and ſo into *Ouſe* again.

Hereby it appeareth, this Bank from *Erith* to *Over*, was made and ſtill is maintain'd rather for Paſſage of Travellers, than to defend the Waters out of the Fens.

From *Over-Cote* to *White-houſe* in *Stretham*, the *Ouſe* hath certain Banks (ſuch as they be) for the moſt part on both Sides; which Banks lie not cloſe upon the River, but ordinarily 18 or 20 Poles between Bank and Bank, and is no where ſtraitned but a little at *Erith* Town, and at the Weres. ——— Between *Over-cote* and *Aldrich* Cauſeway be five Weres, whereof I noted one not 24 Foot by Eſtimation.

Swaſey—— The laſt of the Fen Towns this way. They have but ſmall Fens, other than thoſe between them and *Over*, which on the *South* next *Long-Stanton* are very Meadows; but ſometimes much overflown, by reaſon the Water which cometh from *Stanton* and Parts adjoining, can have no Paſſage when *Ouſe* hath ſurrounded the Grounds above *Over* Bank to *Erith*.

What with the ſtraining of *Ouſe* at *Over-cote*, and the maintaining of *Over* Bank from *Over* to *Erith*, the Grounds under *Swaſey*, *Drayton*, and *Fen-Stanton*, be longer and deeper drowned, than thoſe below *Over* Bank be toward *Willingham*.

Above *Over-cote* to *St. Ives*-ward, the Grounds be all Meadows; yet ſuch be often and long drowned, eſpecially next *Over*, and above the *Cote* againſt *Swaſey*, and the Grounds *South* of *Ouſe*. Upon the Edge of the River lyeth a poor Bank to defend the River from overflowing; which argueth drowning more than the Country deſireth.

Drayton——They have little or no Fen, notwithſtanding their Meadows with every little fluſh of Water be overflown.

Fen-Stanton——They have hardly any Fens.

St. Ives——They have no Fens, but all good Meadows.

The Water at the Bridge is very deep and broad, and in greateſt Floods hath ſmall ſtay there; but the Channel is much ſtraitned between that and *Overcote*, whereof followeth a great Cauſe of the Overflowings of the Meadows between that and *Over* Bank, much holpen by the ſaid Bank ſtopping of the Paſſage of the River at the *Cote*, and other like Annoyance between that and *Erith*.

Erith——Above the Ferry hath a ſmall piece of Fen, lying between the Meadows and the Field Skirts.

At *Erith* the *Ouſe* is 14 Foot deep ordinarily.

Erith Bridge hath nine Arches, or places for Paſſage of Water; every Arch is 12 Foot wide or more.

Below *Erith* to *Aldrich*-ward the River exceedeth not ordinarily in depth 5 Foot, whereof the Water that paſſeth under *Erith* Bridge is a part of the Cauſe, (which ſee in *Over*, p. 77.) and certain ſtrait Weres, of which there are five between *Over* and *Aldrich* Cauſeway. And *Willingham* and *Over* Fens unbank'd, which otherwiſe would force the Water to grind a Channel. Another Cauſe.

This Deſcription of Mr. *Atkins* plainly prove, that notwithſtanding the many Obſtructions in *Ouſe*, yet that the Fens in the *South* Level were the beſt part of them River Meadow, the worſt Summer Land. And the Demand of the firſt Undertakers, as a Recompence for draining, confirms this Account given by Mr. *Atkins*. Example:

A. D. 1620. *The Demands of the Undertakers as a Reward to drain the Fens.*

The DEMANDS of Sir *William Ayloff*, Bart. and *Anthony Thomas*, Eſq; *April* 13. 1620.

To have two third Parts of all Subjects Lands ſurrounded all the Year.
One half Part of all Subjects Lands drowned half the Year, to us and our Heirs in Perpetuity.

According to this Proportion they demanded Part of each particular Fen; therefore by this Demand we may diſcover how much each Part of this Country was drowned before the Undertaking for draining it commenced.

A Liſt of the General Demands you'll find *p.* 34. I ſhall here take notice of thoſe only which relate to the *South* Level in particular.

The DEMANDS.

1. " Fens between the River of *Grant Eaſt*, and the Hards of *Milton Waterbeach* and *Denny Abby Weſt*, and ſo extending *Weſt* between the River *Ouſe* on the *North*, and the Hard-Lands *South* up to *St. Ives* Bridge, and Part on the other Side of the *Ouſe* between *Erith* and *St. Ives* —— —— —— —— } One Eighth Part of the better. One 4th Part of the worſt.
Therefore the beſt of theſe Fens were in Nature rich River Meadow, the worſt good Summer Land.

2. " *Soham* Fens by *Wickham* Hards *South*——————One Sixth Part.
Theſe Fens were therefore in Nature good River Meadows.

3. " Fens between *Mildenhall* River and the great River up to *Harrimere*, and the Uplands of *Iſleham*, *Fordham*, and *Soham*— } One Fourth Part.
Theſe drowned but three Months in Winter.

4. " Fens between *Brandon* River *North*, *Mildenhall* River *South*, and *Littleport* Fen *Weſt* —————————— } One Third Part.
Therefore drowned above three Months.

5. " Fens between *Stoke* River *North*, and *Brandon* River *South* — One 4th Part.
Therefore drowned but three Months in Winter.

6. " Fens

6. "Fens on the *North* Side of *Stoke* River, from *Stoke* Bridge to "the great River between *Helgay* and *Stoke* ——— } One Fourth Part.
Therefore drowned but three Months in the Winter.

7. "*Sutton* and *Haddenham* Fens ——— One Eighth Part.
Therefore these Fens were in Nature rich Meadow Lands.

These Demands of the Undertakers plainly shew, that the worst Part of the *South* Level was not drowned above three Months by the Winter Floods, and that this Level was at worst good Summer Land before the Undertakers meddled with it: Therefore it was the Adventurers undertook to make them good Winter Land. And that the *South* Level was in the good Condition above-mention'd before the Undertaking, is proved and confirmed, in that the Corporation of Adventurers actually had no more Land allow'd them for their Undertaking, than the above-mention'd Sir *William Ayloff*, and *Anthony Thomas*, Esq; demanded: *Viz.*

1. Of the Fens between the River of *Grant East*, and the Hards of *Milton*, &c. the Undertakers demanded ——— } One 8th Part of the better.

Acres.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ———— 10303.
The Adventurers had allotted them out of that Land 1153.—*less than one 8th Part.*

2. Of *Soham* Fens, *&c.* the Undertakers demanded ———— One 6th Part.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ——— 4297.
The Adventurers had allotted them out of that Land 570. ——— *One 6th Part.*

3. Of the Fens between *Mildenhall* River, *&c.* the Undertakers demanded ——— } One Fourth Part.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ——— 11780.
The Adventurers had allotted them out of that Land 3053.—*Less than one 4th Part.*

4. Of the Fens between *Brandon* River and *Mildenhall* River, *&c.* the Undertakers demanded ——— } One Third Part.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ——— 27340.
The Adventurers had allotted them of that Land—10386.—*Above One Third Part.*

5. Of the Fens between *Stoke* River and *Brandon* River, *&c.* the Undertakers demanded ——— } One Fourth Part.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ——— 23290.
The Adventurers had allotted them of that Land —5518.---*Less than one 4th Part.*

6. Of the Fens on the *North* Side of *Stoke* River, *&c.* the Undertakers demanded ——— } One Fourth Part.
The whole Quantity of that Land is ——— 2900.
The Adventurers had allotted them of that Land— 1029. ——— *One Third Part.*

This Calculation, which is made from *Hayward*'s Account of the whole Quantity of Land in the Fens, as deliver'd by him upon Oath to the Commissioners at *Wisbech*, 13. *July*, 1605. (which see in the *Appendix*) and the Quantity the Adventurers have, which is taken from their Lots, as they are laid out in their large Map of the Fens, shew that they really had no more Land allowed them for undertaking to drain the whole, than the first Undertakers had, and therefore demonstrably prove the ancient Goodness of the Fens.

This ancient good Condition of the *South* Level in particular, is also set forth with Instances of Demonstration, in the Petitions from the Inhabitants of this Division of the Fens, and the adjacent Uplands, to King *James* I. before the Fens were undertaken to be drained; and to the Commissioners appointed by *Lyn* Law to be Judges between the Undertakers and the Country — and afterwards to the Parliament, as followeth.

To the King's moſt Excellent Majeſty.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the Fen Towns within the Counties of *Suffolk* and *Cambridge* without the Iſle of *Ely*.

Sheweth

Petition of the Fen Towns againſt Draining.

UNTO your Highneſs, That whereas a moſt laudable and commendable Work for draining of divers ſurrounded Grounds, is at this preſent recommended unto the High Court of Parliament; wherein not only the low and bottom Grounds within the Iſle of Ely, *and other Counties, which be little or nothing worth, are compriſed; but alſo a great Quantity of Fen-Grounds in the Counties of* Suffolk *and* Cambridge *without the Iſle of* Ely, *being of good Value, and lying near unto the Fields and Upland-Grounds, are propoſed to be brought within the Compaſs of that Work, which by reaſon of their Overflowings with the Waters of thoſe Upland Grounds are nothing impair'd, but made more fruitful and much better.——Now for as much as by common Experience we find that ſuch Overflow of Waters doth already paſs eaſy enough from thoſe Fen-Grounds where Deſcent is, and doth run to the Pan, or loweſt Grounds, where their Fall and Reſting is; and ſo thereby the Work of Draining can little avail or profit the ſaid Upland Fen-Grounds, but rather impair them, and make them leſs profitable:*

And for that if ſo great a Quantity of Grounds as is required by the Undertakers in Recompence of their Charge for the ſaid Work, ſhould be proportion'd to thoſe ſmall Fens; then would the Remnant be ſo little, as where many thouſands of People do now relieve and ſuſtain themſelves thereby, ſcarce two Parts of that Number would be able to live of themſelves; which would breed great Inconvenience to the State of thoſe Towns. Wherefore we humbly beſeech your Majeſty, that thoſe Commons or Fens bordering upon thoſe Upland Grounds, and lying without the Rivers of Grant *and* Ouſe, *may be excluded and left out of the Act of Parliament; or elſe that that Law may concern ſuch Grounds only in the ſaid Fen Towns, as are always ſurrounded, and do lye in the Bottom or Pan of the ſaid Fens, and not unto the firm and ſolid Grounds.*

And herein, as we are all bound, ſo we will pray to God for your Majeſty's long and proſperous Reign over us, &c.

The following Petitions are Complaints of the Fen Inhabitants to the Parliament, made againſt the Adventurers for taking their Land away from them: But as I do not intend to recriminate, I ſhall tranſcribe ſo much of each Petition only, as ſets forth the ancient State of the Fens in the *South* Level.

To the Supreme Authority, the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *England*.

The humble Petition of the Owners and Commoners of the Town of *Lakenheath* in the County of *Norfolk*.

Sheweth,

Lakenheath *Petition againſt Adventurers.*

THAT, &c.——*That your Petitioners had in Uſe about* 5700 *Acres of common Fens, and their principal Subſiſtence was by the ſaid Fens; which was not hurtfully ſurrounded Grounds, but ſuch as have been beneficial to us by overflowing. Above* 1400 *Acres of our ſaid Fens are Paſture for Sheep in the hardeſt Time of Winter, they being never drowned (but upon extraordinary Windcatches) and then we have reaped moſt Profit from them the Summer following,* &c.

Signed by above Sixty Inhabitants.

The Petition of the Inhabitants, &c. of *Feltwell* in *Norfolk*.

Sheweth,

Feltwell *Petition againſt Adventurers.*

THAT, &c.——*That when any Flood happeneth, it cometh by Windcatches, and runs over but ſome Part of our Grounds, and continues not long; ſo we are never hurtfully ſurrounded: But conceive and find thoſe Grounds to be bettered thereby.*

thereby. And in our Fens, time out of mind, have been kept many Horſes, Colts, and young Cattle, all Winter time, &c.

Signed JOHN CLARK.

The Petition of the Inhabitants of the Town of *Methwold.*

Sheweth,

THAT, &c.——*That they have ſeveral Sheep-walks which conſiſt of not leſs than* 1700 *Sheep, which uſed to feed Winter and Summer upon our common Fens,* &c. *And that when any Floods happen to be, they come by Wind-catches, and run over but ſome part of our Grounds, and continue not long: So we are never hurtfully ſurrounded, but find theſe Grounds much better by ſuch Overflowings. And on theſe Grounds we uſed to keep* 3 *or* 400 *Milch-kine for Dairies, and fed our working Horſes, and bred Store of young Cattle, which were kept on the Common, time out of mind, in Winter,* &c.

Methwold *Petition againſt Adventurers.*

Signed ABRAHAM YOUNG.

The Petition of the Inhabitants, *&c.* of *Northwold* in *Norfolk.*

Sheweth,

THAT, &c.——*That their Common is excellent good ſmooth Graſs-ground: That* 3700 *Sheep uſually feed upon it, and it does by no means want draining.*

Northwold *Petition againſt Adventurers.*

Signed Charles Croſtes, Tho. Novell, Robert Stalworth.

Theſe Petitions fully prove, that this *South* Level was not in ſuch Condition that it was irreleivable by the common Ways of Draining; but would have become good Winter Land, if the River and Brook Waters had been kept in between Banks, ſet at ordinary diſtance, and been thereby confined, and not ſuffered to ſpread in time of Floods, nor dilate themſelves over the Level. But theſe Petitioners ſay, that the Land was the better for the preceding Winter's-Flood all the next Summer. Be that as it may, they plainly ſhew that the Level was dry, and wanted no Draining the Summer half Year: Therefore *Denver* Sluices ſet croſs the *Ouſe* near *Salters-lode*, were of no ſervice nor uſe to thoſe Lands in Summer time with reſpect of Draining; while they were pernicious to Navigation, by ſtopping the Tide from putting up into the Rivers of *Grant*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon* and *Stoke*, (ſee the Petitions of *Cambridge*, *Brandon*, *Thetford*, &c. againſt the Sluices, *Sect.* 5.) nay, there could have been no Navigation up the aforeſaid Rivers, in regard the Tides were kept out of them by *Denver* Sluices, and the *Bedford* Waters that ſupplied all thoſe Rivers above the Sluices, are wholly ſtopp'd out of them by the Sluice at the *Hermitage*; and turned down the Hundred-foot River. But that the Saſs-doors were kept ſhut moſt part of the Summer to keep up the freſh Water; the Conſequence of which Practice was very pernicious: For ſo much Water as they by this means pent up above the Sluices, by ſo much did the Silt and Sand grow up and increaſe below the Sluice for want of it, to work its proper Effect in ſcouring it away.

Denver *Sluices prejudicial to Navigation.*

And while the Sluice Doors were thus kept ſhut, Navigation was thereby interrupted and confined to certain Times of the Tide, or Watermen were forced to run great Hazard, becauſe of the Fall of Water through the Sluice when opened. Therefore theſe Sluices were all the Summer a real Prejudice to Navigation, while they were of no Advantage nor Benefit to Draining; as the above-mentioned Petitions make appear.

And in the Winter Seaſon, when the *Bedford* Land-Floods came down the New *Bedford* River, which they conſtantly did do every wet Winter with great Rapidity, as bringing with them the Rivers, Springs and downfal Waters of many Counties; the Sluice Doors were forceably kept ſhut by theſe Waters riſing high againſt them for Weeks together, ſo that the Waters in the *South* Level, on the other Side the Sluice, could not get through, but were penn'd in, and made to ſwell and overflow the Lands; inſomuch that the *South* Level be-

came more ſurrounded now in Winter, than it ever was before the erecting theſe Sluices.

Denver *Sluices prejudicial to Draining.*

And after the *Bedford* Floods were abated, and the Sluice Doors could be opened to let the Waters paſs out of the *South* Level, as the Ebb of the Tide gave way, yet there not being Water-way enough through the Sluices, and the Soal of the Sluice being laid eight Foot higher than the old Bottom of the River, and the *Bedford* Waters, by reaſon of the high Situation of the River, in ſome meaſure beating them back, or at leaſt retarding their Motion; before the Waters of the *South* Level could ſhrink in any conſiderable meaſure by reaſon of the Ebb, another Flood from Sea came and ſhut the Sluice Doors. Hence the *South* Level continued much longer drowned now than it uſed to do, or could do before the ſaid Sluices were erected, and theſe Sluices, *&c.* proving of equal Prejudice to Navigation, as to Draining, it gave occaſion to this Obſervation being made, that —— "*The Art of Man could not* "*have contrived two more pernicious Engines, than* Denver *Sluices and the Hun-*"*dred-foot to ruin Navigation and Draining.*

The Adventurers finding theſe Sluices had ſo ill Effect upon the *South* Level, (for whoſe Benefit alone they were deſigned, ſaith my Lord *Gorges*, and Sir *William Dugdale*) and obſerving that the River on *Lenne* Side of the Sluices was ſilted up 10 Foot, which growing up of the River was a great Obſtacle to Draining: They, *Anno* 1653, cut *Downham Eea*, alias St. *John's Eea*, begin-

1653. St. John's *Eea made.*

ning above *Denver* Sluice, (ſee the Map of *Bedford* Level) and carried nearly Line-right about five Miles along by the *Eaſt* Side of the *Ouſe* towards *Lenne*, to a little below *Stow* Bridge. This River, Sir *William Dugdale* ſaith, was made 120 Foot wide, and 10 Foot deep, for the more ſpeedy Conveyance away of the Waters out of the *South* Level, with three Sluices at the End.

And becauſe of this 10 Foot *Choak*, the Adventurers found themſelves under a Neceſſity alſo to cut a new Drain on the *Weſt* Side *Ouſe* out of *Well-Creek*,

Tong's *Drain made.*

(ſee the Map) to fall into *Ouſe*, a little below *Stow* Bridge, called *Tongs-drain*, or *Marſhland Cutt*, to convey the Waters out of the Middle Level; which before the 10 Foot Choak, fell into *Ouſe* at *Salters-lode*, whereabouts, as I have before obſerv'd, there was, before *Denver* Sluices were erected, a Fall of 10 Foot from the Soil of the Fens to Low-water Mark in the River *Ouſe*.

Immediately after theſe two Drains, *viz.* *Downham Eea*, and *Tongs-drain* were made, the River *Ouſe* grew up, and the Sands increaſed more between *Salters-lode* and *Stow-bridge*, than in any other Part of the River, occaſion'd chiefly by *Downham Eea*, through which Part of the Waters that ſhould have helped to ſcour away the Sand were turned out of *Ouſe* for that Length of way; partly by turning many of the Waters of *Nene* through *Tong*'s Drain, and partly by keeping the Sluice Doors ſhut moſt Part of the Summer, ſo that no freſh Water at all was ſuffer'd to come that way to help to ſcour out the River beneath the Sluice. But principally by another Effect of that Dam, whereby the Receptacles of the Tides, and the large Indraughts of the Waters, which uſed to put up with them from Sea, and were received into the ſaid Rivers, were intercepted and cut ſhort near 30 Miles of their wonted Flow; by reaſon whereof there wanted that Plenty, Force, and Weight of a Back-Water, which is neceſſary to ſcour out the Silt and Sand brought up by the Tides. So that the River continued to ſilt up ſo very faſt, that in about three Years time after the making *Downham Eea* its Outfall was choaked up and loſt, and the *Eea* was dammed up, and the Bridge at *Stow*, which had been built over it, was taken down to ſave the Charge of maintaining it, and inſtead thereof a Road made croſs it. And *Downham Eea* was of no Uſe till 1666, then the 24 Foot Drain was let into it, which was cut from *Soam* Meere for draining it by Tunnels under the three Rivers aforeſaid. But now thoſe Tunnels are ſtopped up, and the *Eea* is render'd again of little or no Uſe, the Bottom of the *Ouſe* being higher than the Soal of the Sluice next the *Ouſe*, and alſo as high as the Soil of the Fens.

Thus in the Courſe of a very few Years, thoſe very Works which were deſigned to drain the Fens, (particularly the *South* Level) and to have made them good Winter Lands, did the Reverſe, *i. e.* abſolutely drowned the Level, now no longer Summer Land.

And that *Denver* Sluices were the Cauſe of this Effect, beſides the Proofs already given in *Sect.* 5. other Petitions from the Country to the Parliament than what are mentioned before, ſet forth, *viz.* The

The Petition of the Inhabitants of the Hundred of *Clackcloſe* in *Norfolk*.

Sheweth,

Clackcloſe Hundred Petition againſt Adventurers.

THAT, &c.——*That of late Years, ſince the placing a great Dam and Sluice croſs the River* Ouſe *near* Salters-lode, *and other Works made by the Adventurers for draining the Level, the River* Ouſe *is raiſed ſo high with Silt from the Sea, that not only the ancient Drains and Outfalls are thereby ſtopped and become of little Uſe, but alſo the Waters of the ſaid Level being by the ſaid Sluice and Dam, and other Works penn'd up and reſtrain'd, and diverted from their ancient Courſe, upon every Flood or Downfall do ſwell and overflow your Petitioners Lands, and cannot be gotten off; whereby they often lie drowned, and are of no Benefit the whole Year*, &c.

To the ſame Effect were the Petitions to the Parliament, 1696.

From the Owners and Occupiers of Lands in the ſeveral Towns of *Ely*—*Sutton*--*Stretham*--*Thetford*--*Northwold*--*Methwold*—*Feltwell*—*Hockwell*—*Wilton*--*Brandon*--*Wainford*—*Lakenheath*—*Eſewell*—*Iſleham*—*Wallington*—*Barton* and—*Mildenhall*, in the Counties of *Cambridge*, *Suffolk* and *Norfolk*, and within the *South* Part of the Great Level of the Fens, called *Bedford* Level. And,

The Caſe of the Landholders and Inhabitants of more than ſixty Towns and Pariſhes, lying within, and bordering upon the Fens of *Bedford* Level; among other Complaints not here enumerated,

Sheweth,

Caſe of the Landholders in the Fens.

THAT the publick Banks and Drains which the Adventurers ſtand obliged to maintain for the common Safety of the Level, have for divers Years been neglected and ſuffered to be in decay; whereby on every ſmall Flood great Part of the ſaid Level hath been yearly overflown, and for ſeveral Years been in a far worſe Condition than they were before the Undertaking.

That the Middle and South *Level, beſides vaſt Damages in former Years, have by the Floods of this preſent Year*, 1665. *been, and ſtill are entirely drowned; and your Petitioners have yearly ſuſtained Loſſes in Cattle, Corn, Stock and Proviſions, to the Value of One Hundred Thouſand Pounds and upwards, to the utter Ruin of great Numbers of the ſaid Inhabitants*, &c.

That the Lands in the South *Level, which alone can pretend to receive Benefit from the Sluices at* Denver *Dam, are of far leſs Value than the Land adjoining to the ſaid Level, which are, and divers Years paſt have been, overflowed and damaged by their means; and the ſaid* South *Level in general hath been in worſe Condition ſince, than it was before the erecting* Denver *Sluices.*

Thus the Sluices at *Denver* are agreed on all Sides to be the Cauſe of Prejudice to Draining, as well as to Navigation; and I conceive theſe Miſchiefs to both to have been thus effected.

In *Sect.* 2. I have obſerv'd, that the Freſh-water alone of any River, is not capable of keeping open the Channel and Outfall of any River to Sea-ward, unaſſiſted with the Ebbs of the Tides, that have a great Power of grinding.

The Reaſon why Freſh-waters unaſſiſted by the Tides cannot preſerve and maintain their Outfall, is —— Water naturally ſeeketh the loweſt Place, and winds itſelf into great variety of Meanders to find it, making its way through the very Sink of the Country; and therefore all navigable Rivers, eſpecially thoſe which the Tide puts up into, have very little Deſcent; (not ſix Inches *per* Mile) and the leſs the Deſcent the further is Navigation extended.

Thus in the *Thames*, a Spring-Tide flows from 12 to 18, and 20 Foot in height at *London*, which is between 40 and 50 Miles off from Sea, which proves the Deſcent of that River to be leſs than the Deſcent of any other River in *England*.

If the Freſh-waters were to glide along this eaſy Deſcent, their Motion would hardly be perceptible, and they could not have Weight and Action enough to grind;

grind; but when the Tides put up from Sea, (as they do twice every 24 Hours) they raiſe the Land-waters above their natural Situation, (at *London* obſerve from 12 to 18 Foot in height) whereby they having acquired this height, do, on the Retreat of the Tide to Sea, when it is ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel, fall by means of this acquired Deſcent with Weight and Rapidity ſufficient to grind away the Sand and Silt, and keep the Channel open. And thus in the River *Ouſe*, at *Salters-lode*, which is 26 Miles from Sea, the Waters were raiſed 12 or 14 Foot above their natural Situation, and the Tide putting up into all the other Rivers of *Nene*, *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall* and *Grant*, the Quantity of Back-waters was thereby ſo greatly increaſed and raiſed, that they ran out in the greater Room, and kept the larger Channel open.

But after this Dam or Sluice at *Denver* was erected croſs the *Ouſe*, the Tidal-Flood was ſtopped there, and could not put up into *Ouſe*, *Nene*, *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall*, or *Grant* Rivers, but was forced up the Hundred-foot, or *Bedford* River.

All theſe Rivers being hindred from receiving the Floods from Sea, which was a prodigious quantity of Water; the *Ouſe* being heretofore 150 Foot wide, where *Denver* Sluices were plac'd, and a Spring-Tide filling it 14 Foot high from Low-water, the Channel and Outfall loſt almoſt all the Back-water it uſed to have come down with the Ebb, to ſcour out the Sand and keep them open. For though the Spring-Tides flow'd up the *Bedford* River, yet the Bottom of that River being not above *five or ſix Foot deep under Soil*, (whereas the Bottom of the *Ouſe* was *fourteen Foot under Soil*) and the Situation of the *Bedford* River very aſcending, as is plain; for from *Salters-lode* along this River to *Erith*, is not half ſo many Miles as along the old *Ouſe* to *Erith*: therefore the Tide could not put up half ſo many Miles into this River, as it did up the *Ouſe*; and then too, there was no other branching Rivers to receive the Tides as Receptacles; and during the Neip-Tides, the Flood from Sea could not put up into the *Bedford* River at all, becauſe the Bottom of that River is 8 Foot higher than the old Bottom of *Ouſe*, and conſequently above the Reach of the Neip-Tides: (whereas before the Sluices at *Denver* were erected, the loweſt Neip-Tides did put up into the aforeſaid Rivers) and in their Reflux, (followed by the Land-waters) they kept the Channel and Outfall from growing up even during the Neips. But ſince the ſaid Sluices were erected, and ſhut the Tide out of all the aforeſaid Rivers, and the *Bedford* River's Bottom is too high for the Flood to reach it; the Channel below the Sluice had no back Waters, during the Neips, to keep it open; but the Land-waters only, which beſides their being very inconſiderable in Summer, I have above, and in *Sect.* 2. ſhew'd, are not capable of keeping open any Channel and Outfall lying upon foul Seas.

Therefore the Channel below the Dam at *Denver* did, immediately after it was erected, ſilt up, till its Bottom came to be on a hanging Level with the Bottom of the *Bedford* River, *i. e.* it ſilted and grew up in a very little time eight or ten Feet. And this the ſooner too, becauſe the Sluice Doors were often kept ſhut a long time together in the Summer, to hold up the Waters in the Rivers above the Sluices for Navigation; ſo that not only the Tide was ſtopp'd out of thoſe Rivers, but the Land-Waters were kept in them, ſo as that none were ſuffered to come down to ſcour the Channel and Outfall, as is obſerv'd before; and therefore the River was depriv'd of almoſt all the Back-Water it anciently uſed to have come down to keep it open.

As the Neip-Tides could not put up the *Bedford* River at all, and the Spring-Tides not half ſo many Miles as they anciently flowed up the *Ouſe*, and as this new River had no branching Receptacles to occaſion an Indraught; therefore by that time it was High-Water as far as the Tide put up the *Bedford* River, the Ebb was but inconſiderably ſpent at *Salters-lode*, and conſequently the Water there not being ſunk low enough, the Ebb of *Bedford* River could have no Force to grind there; for, as Colonel *Dodſon* ſaith, (in his printed Scheme for Draining) " *no Ebb or Indraught can grind and keep open any Haven or River lying* " *upon foul Seas, but what runs at laſt quarter Ebb*; i. e. when the Water is ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel. Hence, becauſe it ebb'd in the *Bedford* River before the Tide was ſunk low enough at *Salters-lode*, the ſaid *Bedford* Waters could have no Power to grind till they came toward *Germans*, where the Tide was ſo fallen off to Sea, that the Waters were confined to the Com-

paſs of the Channel: And therefore even a Spring-Tide had no Power to grind out the River upwards; but inſtead thereof dropp'd their Sand and Silt in ſuch manner, and by ſuch degrees, that in a ſhort time the Bottom of the River was rais'd ſo high, that the Neip-Tides could not put up any Water ſo far as *Denver* Sluices, and the Spring-Tides but very little, (for the ſame Reaſon.) And therefore if it had been laſt Quarter-Ebb toward *Lenne*, and the Water had been ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel there by that time it began to ebb at *Salters-lode*; yet there being even in Spring-Tides but a ſmall Quantity of Back-Water to return to ſcour and grind out the Sand in its Ebb, the River, Haven, and Channel gradually ſilted up.——As the Tidal-Flood was ſhut out of all the old Rivers of *Ouſe*, *Nene*, *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall*, and *Grant*, natural Receptacles ordain'd by God for it, and thereby the Indraught loſt; therefore the Flood was at a Stand in the River at leaſt an Hour, and ſo had time to drop its Silt and Sand brought with it from Sea; or elſe it began to ebb in the *Bedford* River an Hour ſooner than it anciently did when its Courſe was up the *Ouſe*, &c. and if ſo, it loſt its Property of grinding (for Reaſons given above.) Hence it came to paſs, the River ſilted up more between *Salters-lode* and *Lenne*, than between *Lenne* and the Sea. 1ſt, Becauſe the Waters of *Bedford* River ebb'd before the Water at *Salters-lode* was ſunk low enough; and 2dly, Becauſe the Flood ſtagnated at *Salters-lode* an Hour, and ſo had time to drop its Silt; or elſe ebb'd an Hour too ſoon for *Lenne*, and both dropp'd its Silt, and (in a great meaſure) loſt its Property of grinding between *Salters-lode* and *Lenne*: But below *Lenne* to Seaward, the Water being ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel ſooner than above *Lenne*, and there being a very wide Space or River between *Germans* and *Lenne*, which receiv'd (like a Baſon) a large Quantity of Sea Water every Tide, the Reflux of this Receptacle chiefly kept the Channel downward from ſilting, ſo faſt as did the River upwards.

The River upward grew or ſilted up to that degree in Summer-time, that the Outfalls of all the Drains for the Fens, and for Marſhland, were choaked up; and tho' they rais'd the Soal of their Sluices, yet the Sands ſo prevail'd, that the Sluice Doors of all the Drains were generally in Summer time kept ſhut by the Silt. Inſomuch that *William Stafford*, Eſq; of *Denver*, obſerved above 40 Years ſince, " That the Fens were moſt drown'd in the Summer time, when " there had not been much Rain or Land-Floods in the preceding Winter: But " when there had been great Land-Floods in the Winter, and the Fens much " drowned then, in the Summer following they would tolerably be dry.

" The Reaſon or Cauſe, he ſaith is ———The preceeding Summer had ſilted " or choaked the River *Ouſe* below the Sluices at *Denver*, (the great and only " Outfall of the Fens) and thereby their Draining was loſt; ſo that all the " Snow and Rain-waters during the Choak, ſtagnated in the Fens until the Sun " and Wind dried them up. But in a wet Winter the Land-flood ſcoured away " the Silt and Choak that was below *Denver* Sluices, and thereby opened the " Outfall of the Fens and drained them.

So that, whereas before theſe Sluices were erected, the Fens could not be drowned at all in Winter but by great Floods; now ſince the erecting them, thoſe Lands *vice verſâ*, cannot be drained in Summer but by great Floods in Winter. This Obſervation moſt evidently proves, that the *South* Level was good Summer Land, though the Winter Floods were ever ſo great before the Undertaking; and in moderate Winters whole Years Land.

Such was the precarious State of Draining, from the time *Denver* Sluices were built croſs the River of great *Ouſe*, near *Salters-lode*, *Anno* 1651—2. until they were undermined firſt, and afterwards blown up and deſtroy'd by the Tides from Sea, *Anno* 1713.

SECT. VII.

Of the preſent ſad State of the Navigation of Lyn *and* Cambridge, *&c. And of the Navigable Rivers that have their Courſe through the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level; and of draining in thoſe Fens, in the Province of* Marſhland, *and in the Hundreds and Parts adjacent; i. e. from the time* Denver *Sluices were undermined and deſtroy'd by the Tides,* Anno 1713. *to this preſent Year,* 1725.

AFTER the Tides had undermined and blown up *Denver* Sluices, ſome People were big with Expectation of a deeper Channel; eſpecially thoſe who did not conſider why the Sluice Doors, while ſtanding, were kept ſhut ſome Weeks together, by the Land Floods pouring down *Bedford* River in Winter time: (as before deſcrib'd.) And indeed, for two dry Years which immediately followed, the River did deepen, or give way; and all thoſe Outlets for the Water (of the Fens of the Province of *Marſhland*, the Hundred of *Clackcloſe*, &c.) between *Salters-lode* and *Lenne*, which half a Century paſt had loſt their way to Sea, began to find it again. For though they were dry Years, and conſequently not much freſh Water in the Rivers above *Denver* to come down to grind; yet the Land-Floods of the preceding Winter having ſcoured out to Sea much of the Silt lodged between *Denver* and *Lyn*, and the River in conſequence thereof had given way, and the Bottom was lower under Soil; the River *Ouſe* was thereby capable of receiving the more Water from Sea, and the Sluices being deſtroy'd, the Rivers about *Denver*, ancient Receptacles for the Tides, were now free and open to receive ſo much of the Floods from Sea, as could flow over the Eight Foot Dam, and through the remaining Ruin of the Sluices: And theſe Tidal Floods now finding in ſome meaſure their ancient Courſe again, (which they had been depriv'd of above ſixty Years) and ſpreading themſelves every Spring-Tide into the aforeſaid Rivers, natural Receptacles for it; Navigation became more certain and eaſy, and leſs chargeable; and theſe Waters ſo put from Sea, did in their Ebb and Reflux deſcend with a Force and Action, at leaſt ſufficient to preſerve and maintain the Depth in the River and Channel between *Denver* and *Lyn*, which the Land-floods of the preceding Winter had gained; and would have drove out the Sands with great Effect, if the *Hermitage* Sluices had been removed when *Denver* Sluices fell, for the freſh Waters to have had their old Courſe, and to have aſſiſted the Tides: But the Bottom of the River being rais'd too high by the Sand that had ſubſided and ſettled below the Sluices, while they were ſtanding, to ſuffer the Neip-Tides to top them at *Salters-lode*, therefore when the ſaid Sluices were deſtroy'd and gone, the Neip-Tides could not put up any Waters into the Rivers above *Denver*, (as they were wont to do before the ſaid Sluices were built); and conſequently, ſuch a little Quantity put up from Sea at all, during the Neips, that they had in their Reflux but little Power to grind the River and Channel downward. Therefore they were the Spring-Tides that put up into the aforeſaid Rivers above *Denver*, that in their Ebb and Retreat to Sea, maintained the River and Channel deeper downward, than they were while the Sluices were ſtanding, and while the Tides were by them ſtopped out of theſe Receptacles: And had not the Floods from Sea been obſtructed in their Flux and Reflux, by the Rubbiſh and Ruin of *Denver* Sluices, which ſtill to this Day remain; and by the Narrowneſs of their Paſſage through that Part of the Sluices left ſtanding, which is but 80 Foot wide for the Water-way, (whereas the River was formerly here 150 Foot wide) 'tis highly probable they would have ſcoured the Silt and Sand out of the River *Ouſe*, *Lynhaven* and the Channel to Sea, with more Effect.

Bedford *Waters over-ride* Cambridge *River.*

But as the *Bedford* is a much higher Situation and greater Aſcent than the *Cambridge* River, (for ſo I call that part of the *Ouſe* above *Denver*) and the Reflux of every high Spring-Tide down *Bedford* River, while the Sluices were ſtanding, did forcibly keep the Sluice Doors ſhut, till the ſaid Waters were ebb'd away and ſunk to a Level with the Land-waters in *Cambridge* River, to the great Hindrance of Navigation: So now, ſince the Sluices are fallen, and yet the

Hermitage Sluices ſtanding, which forces the freſh Water down *Bedford* River, the Ebb of every Spring-Tide out of the ſaid *Bedford* River flows up the *Cambridge* River above an Hour; *i. e.* the Water at the Mouth of the *Bedford* River ebbs every Spring-Tide above an Hour ſooner than the Water of the *Cambridge* River at the Sluices. This Phænomenon evidently demonſtrates, that while the Sluices were ſtanding, the Waters in *Bedford* River endeavour'd to ebb at leaſt one Hour too ſoon, occaſion'd by its high Situation, and want of Branches to receive and draw on the Tide: And thus wanting an Indraught, the Flood muſt needs be at a Stand; unable to go forward for want of Receptacles to receive it, and as unable to get back for above an Hour, becauſe the Waters below to Sea-ward could not give way ſooner: So, that during this Hour, the Tideal Flood being almoſt a dead Water, dropt the Silt brought along with them. This the Adventurers confeſſed, in a Paper of Objections to the Petition of *Lyn*, 1654. they ſaid, —— "*That the violent Motion of* "*the Flood ceaſing, the Soil, or Silt, being weighty, immediately ſettled:*" And this Soil or Silt (for want of a ſufficient Quantity of back Water to drive it back to Sea again, never wanted before the Sluices were built) remained fixed in the Bottom of the River, and increaſed *Stratum ſuper Stratum* every Tide, while *Denver* Sluices were ſtanding. So that the Bottom of the River was raiſed almoſt as high as the Surface of the Fens, render'd uncapable of receiving their Waters, and paſſing them to Sea; and conſequently the ſaid Fens became more overflowed, and longer drowned than they ever were before the Sluices were built. And Navigation upon the River was confin'd to Spring-Tides only, the Neip Tides not flowing high enough to float the Veſſels, tho' flat-bottom'd, over the Silt and Sand.

The Conſequence.

After the Fall of the Sluices, the Ebb of the *Bedford* Waters flow'd near two Hours up the *Cambridge* River, with additional Silt and Sand every Spring-Tide, and dropt moſt of it between *Denver* and *Littleport*: For though the Tides which put up above *Denver*, did in their Reflux, in ſome meaſure, ſcour the River below *Denver*, by *Lenne* to Sea; yet thoſe Tides having no freſh Waters to raiſe to a Head at *Harrimere*, (the *Ouſe* being turned down the *Bedford* River) therefore here was ſcarce any back Water in Summer time, to ſcour out the Silt dropp'd and ſettled in this Part of the River; which ſettling of the Silt was chiefly occaſion'd by the Hundred-foot Drain over-riding the *Ouſe*, and making its Waters ſtagnate. Hence it came to paſs, that it did ſilt up conſiderably in thoſe two dry Years that had no Land-Floods between *Denver* and *Littleport*.

Land-Floods deſcending Bedford *River, take an awkard Courſe into* Cambridge *River.*

Soon after, wet Years enſuing, the *Bedford* Land-Floods came down with great Rapidity and Violence: And as when the Sluices were ſtanding, theſe Floods, whenever they deſcended, kept the Flood-gates of the Sluices ſhut for Weeks together; now ſince thoſe Sluices are fallen, the Land-Floods that come down the *Bedford* River take their Courſe through the Remains of the Sluices up the *Cambridge* River, inſtead of running to their natural Outfall by *Lyn* to Sea. And it was obſerv'd in *November* and *December*, *Ann.* 1720. that the Land-Floods, which ſo deſcended the *Bedford*, ran violently up the *Cambridge* River for twenty one Days together without any Intermiſſion, or any Return to be perceived all that time.

The Conſequence.

The miſchievous Effects of this aukward Courſe or counter Stream were ſoon felt; for the Outlets of *Marſhland*, *Clackcloſe*, &c. before-mention'd, between *Salters-lode* and *Lenne*, were all choaked up again; and the Bottom of the River on *Cambridge* Side the Sluices, which was (before their Fall) ten Foot deeper than the Bottom on the *Lenne* Side, (the Reaſon becauſe the Sluice-Doors ſhut the Tides out) as was proved by plumbing in the Preſence of the late Sir *Henry Hobart*, Mr. *Walpole*, &c. *Ann.* 1695. was ſilted up that ten Foot in the Compaſs of five or ſix Years: Three or four Foot of which was raiſed with the Silt carry'd in in the twenty one Days aforeſaid. This Miſchief would have been prevented, if as ſoon as *Denver* Sluices fell, the Adventurers had taken up the Sluices at the *Hermitage*, and given the Stream its old Courſe by *Harrimere* and *Ely* to *Denver*; for then the Freſhes incorporating with the Tides, they would jointly have drove out the Sand, and born down all before them to Sea.

For the Cauſe of this fatal Miſchief I take to have been this: Above *Denver*, from the Time of the Fall of the Sluices until theſe Land-Floods came, the River was ſilted up with Sand left by the Tides from Sea five or ſix Foot; occaſion'd by

by the *Bedford* over-riding the *Cambridge* River, caus'd by the Waters being forced down *Bedford* by the *Hermitage* Sluices: But ſtill the Bottom of the River was four Foot lower on *Cambridge* than on *Lenne* Side of the Remains of the Sluices. And theſe Sands being driven by every Flood of Tide up the *Cambridge* River, were left as high as the Tides went; and the freſh Waters (at the Return of the Flood) drove along with them ſome of the Sand left by the Salt; now 'tis certain, tho' theſe Waters ſwept before them ſome of the Silt, yet there could not be ſo thick a *Stratum* in that Part of the River, as in the other where the Salt comes every Tide. Hence it came to paſs, that the *Cambridge* River toward *Ely* was much deeper than the River toward *Denver* at Low-water Mark, and conſequently the Bottom of the River had a hanging Level, and conſiderable Deſcent from *Denver* Sluices towards *Cambridge*. Alſo by means of *Downham Eea* and *Tong*'s Drain (Slakers to *Cambridge* River and *Nene*) the *Ouſe* was ſo grown up, that before this Land-Flood came, the Bottom of the River at *Stow-Bridge* was four Foot higher than the Bottom of the River above *Denver*; and therefore there was an abſolute Neceſſity for the *Bedford* River Waters to run up, or rather down the *Cambridge* River, the Deſcent of the River being toward *Cambridge*, and not to the Outfall by *Lenne*. And what gave Occaſion to its continuing to do ſo ſo long, was———the Banks of all the Rivers of the *South* Level, were ruinous and in Decay, and ſo low that the Land-Floods ran over them, and drowned the Fens in that Level: for thoſe Banks were but little regarded while *Denver* Sluices ſtood.

South Level drowned by neglect of Banks.

This the Landholders of the Fens, *&c.* (*ſee P.* 83.) teſtify'd. They ſaid, *that the publick Banks and Drains, which the Adventurers ſtood obliged to maintain for the common Safety of the Level, had for divers Years been neglected, and ſuffered to be in Decay, whereby on every ſmall Flood greateſt Part of the Level had been yearly overflown*, &c.

And the Petitions of *Stoke*, *Weerham*, *Wretton*, &c. within the *South* Diviſion of the Fens, ſhew ——*That for Default of maintaining the Banks and Drains*, &c. *the Petitioners Lands in the* South *Level were yearly drowned*, &c. So that here was not only the Rivers of *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall* and *Grant*, but the whole *South* Level open to receive the Floods coming from a vaſtly higher Country (than that Level) down the ſteep *Bedford* River.

Here being ſo large a Receipt for the Waters, nothing to reſiſt their Paſſage, and a great Deſcent for them that occaſioned a large Indraught this way; and from the Mouth of *Bedford* River, towards the Outfal by *Lenne*, Sands four Foot higher than the Bottom of *Cambridge* River; and the Low-water Mark, in the *Ouſe*, below *Salters-lode*, higher than the Soil of the *South* Level (*though before the Sluices were erected, Low-water Mark was there* 10 *Foot under Soil*) of natural Conſequence the *Bedford* Land-floods could not get to Sea by *Lenne*, where they met with ſuch high reſiſting Sands, but muſt of mere neceſſity run towards *Cambridge*, where a low Country was open to receive them.

Cambridge *River choaked up four Foot in* 21 *Days.*

And the Tides from Sea putting up the *Cambridge* River, carried with them a great deal of Silt; and the Land-Floods deſcending the *Bedford*, having an Indraught into the *South* Level, and flowing on without any return back, either of Sea or Land-water while the *Bedford* Flood laſted, (there being no Ebb all that time in the River *Ouſe*, above *Denver*) to ſcour out the Silt that ſubſided, the ſaid River above *Denver* grew up four Foot in the 21 Days Flood aforeſaid; which was occaſioned entirely by the *Bedford* Land-Floods taking their aukward Courſe through the Remains of *Denver* Sluice into the *South* Level, and which they were forced to do, the *Hermitage* Sluices preventing them taking their ancient Courſe by *Harrimere* and *Ely*. And when the *Bedford* Land-Floods were over, and the Water received into the *South* Level were not hindred by them from getting back into the River to make its way to Sea; yet there being an 8 Foot Dam, and the Ruin of *Denver* Sluices croſs the *Ouſe* to obſtruct their Paſſage, and they being expanded over ſo large and flat a Level, and having ruined Banks, Sedge, *&c.* to Soil through in their way back; and the River through which they were to get to Sea, choaked up almoſt as high as the Soil of that Level, they could not return with any quick Motion, but ſtrained through Reeds, *&c.* as through a Sieve, ſo that they had but little Weight and Action to grind out the Sands lodg'd in the River, which was grown ſo high, that Low-water Mark was become above the Surface of the ſaid Level; and therefore

that

that Diviſion of the Fens continued ſurrounded, with a Depth of ſo much Water as was left by the Floods, and as was no higher than Low-water Mark in the River, until the Sun and Air exhaled them, and dried them up. For tho' St. *John*'s *Eea* was made by the Adventurers a Slaker to the *South* Level, yet becauſe the River *Ouſe* was choaked up, and its Bottom raiſed high with Sand, the Waters of St. *John*'s *Eea* were obſtructed and hindred from getting to Sea. So that that Cut which had coſt a vaſt Sum of Money became of no Uſe to convey any Waters from off the *South* Level to Sea. And while it was of no Service to the Level, it prov'd prejudicial to the contiguous Lands without the Level; for the Waters that came into it out of the Fens ran over its Banks, and drowned the adjacent Country; which was, before St. *John*'s *Eea* was made, rich Meadow and Paſture Land, and continually dry, but ſince almoſt continually drowned.

St. John's Eea *drowns the Country.*

And by means of the River *Ouſe* being thus choaked and ſilted up, the Land-Floods and Waters of the middle Level, whoſe natural and only Outfall is by *Lyn*, could not get to Sea, any more than thoſe of the *South* Level. For tho' *Tong*'s Drain was made at a great Expence a Slaker to the Middle Level, yet it did that Level no more Service than St. *John*'s *Eea* did the *South* Level, (therefore, contrary to Law, Engines are here uſed) while it does the adjacent Country more Damage; for the Adventurers at all times running their Waters thro' the *Powdyke* into *Tong*'s Drain, the Lands in *Wiggenhall*, *Clackcloſe*, and great Part of Marſhland, which lye without the Level, are made a Baſon and Receptacle for the Waters of the Middle Level, and drowned the whole Year round; whereas before *Tong*'s Drain was made, the ſaid Lands were continually dry, and were rich Meadow and Paſture. Thus the Adventurers, who undertook to drain the Fens, and make them Winter Lands, have not only drowned thoſe Fens, and made them neither Winter nor Summer Lands, but they have alſo drowned above 60,000 Acres of Land without the Bounds of the Fens, which was, before *Denver* Sluices gave Occaſion to the Decay of the Outfall by *Lyn*, rich Meadow and Paſture. (*See the Petition of* Marſhland *and* Clack-cloſe, *p.* 65, 83.)——This extenſive Deluge and Depopulation was fatally cauſed by the Adventurers having Power by Act of Parliament to *erect any new Works*, as well *without*, as within, *the ſaid great Level, for the conveying the Waters of the ſaid great Level by convenient Outfalls to the Sea.* Without this Power they could not have made thoſe Works that were the Deſtruction of Draining; ſo that it may be ſaid they obtain'd a Power to deſtroy themſelves.

Tong's Drain *drowns the Country.*

There are who aſſign Reaſons for repealing the Clauſe in the Act of Parliament, that gives Power to the Adventurers for extending their Works without the Level.

They ſay, by that Power were *Denver* Sluices built, and *St. John*'s *Eea* and *Tong*'s Drain made; which Works have almoſt deſtroy'd the Outfall of the River *Ouſe*, the Draining in the Fens, and the Navigation of *Lyn*.

By that Power Sluices were built croſs *Wisbech* River at a vaſt Expence, to the Prejudice of that Outfall, long ſince deſerted as uſeleſs.

By that Power they attempted Damming croſs, and diverting *Wisbech* River; for when the Commiſſioners of Sewers demanded of the Adventurers, By what Authority they did it? Mr. *Chicheley*, then Surveyor-General of that Corporation, anſwered, That by Act of Parliament they had Power.

Under Colour of ſuch Power they form'd Schemes for Cuts from *Wisbech* to *Lyn*, and from *Eea* Brink to *Lyn*; and to ſet Sluices at the End of that Cut at *Lyn* Harbour it ſelf. As ſuch Projects as theſe would be the Deſtruction of Navigation and Draining, they ſay it ought not to be in the Power of the Adventurers to attempt them. And that therefore the ſaid Clauſe ought to be repealed; and it would be for the Intereſt of Draining to have it repealed.

But be that as it may, I proceed to inform you, that as Draining ſtill continued to decay after *Denver* Sluices were demoliſh'd, Navigation was alſo render'd as bad (by means of the River being choaked up above *Denver* with Sand, occaſion'd chiefly by the back Courſe of the Land-Floods) as when the Sluices were ſtanding, bating the Loſs of Time waiting at the Sluice, and Hazard in paſſing through.

That theſe Reaſons do truly aſſign the Cauſes of theſe Effects, ſo pernicious to Navigation and Draining, our own Obſervations demonſtrate: We obſerve,

that in every ordinary Spring-Tide, the Floods from Sea that put up the *Bedford* River, do Ebb, or begin to return back again above an Hour ſooner than the Ebb begins in the *Cambridge* River, and during that time run up that River with the Tide, the Tide flowing above an Hour longer in the *Cambridge*, than in the *Bedford* River.

And in every high Spring-Tide, the Flood runs two Hours longer up the *Cambridge* River than up the *Bedford*; and during theſe two Hours returns back again down the *Bedford*, and with the Tide runs up the *Cambridge* River with additional Silt and Sand.

And in Raking-Tides, the Ebb of the Sea-water which had put up the *Bedford* River, and indeed the freſh Waters following that Ebb, run up the *Cambridge* River perpetually, and does not return back again at all, while thoſe extraordinary high Tides continue; of which the Town Pilot of *Lenne*, and the eldeſt Bridgman of that Port, were with me Eye-witneſs; ſo that high Tides which ſcour out all other Rivers, choak this up. And the River not being Imbanked above *Littleport* on the *Weſt* Side, and the Waters of *Ouſe* being ſtopt by the *Hermitage* Sluice at *Erith*, and ſo turned down the *Bedford* River, and conſequently ſcarcely any freſh Waters in the River above *Denver* to incorporate with the Tides, there is ſuch an Indraught for the Floods from Sea, and the Ebbs of the Hundred-foot Waters which run with them up the *Cambridge* River, that they all of them keep running forward through *Ely* Bridge three or four Days together without any return; this Mr. *Bateſon* was an Eye-witneſs of: And they whoſe Buſineſs is upon the River affirm, it conſtantly does ſo every high Tide; and at *Stretham* the Ferry-man affirmed, at the time of our obſerving at *Denver* and *Ely*, &c. that the Waters continued riſing there ſeveral Days together, *&c.*

Cauſe of Cambridge River filling up.

This Water receiv'd above *Denver*, not ebbing back again till after the Spring-Tides begin to fall off, as 'tis impoſſible they ſhould, being over-rid by the Waters of the new *Bedford* River, the Silt and Sand brought up with thoſe Tides from Sea, and the Ebbs of *Bedford* Waters doubly ſiltey joining them, ſubſide and remain fixed to the Bottom of *Cambridge* River; inſomuch that Mr. *Stafford* of *Denver* affirms, that the ſaid River between *Denver* and *Littleport* ſilted up one Foot this preſent Year. And indeed it naturally muſt be ſo: For theſe Spring-Tides putting up the *Cambridge* River, having ſcarcely any Land-waters to be rais'd above their natural Situation, ſo as to acquire a Weight ſufficient to ſcour out the Silt the Sea-waters leave, therefore the ſaid Silt or Sand remains in the Bottom of the River, and increaſeth every Spring-Tide between *Denver* and *Ely*, and as high as thoſe Tides reach.

This unnatural Effect is altogether owing to the Hundred-foot Drain, or (as it is ſometimes call'd) the New *Bedford* River: For the Spring-Tides and Land-Floods which naturally ſcour out all other Rivers, keep open their Channels, and maintain their Outfalls to Sea, are here, by the indirect, or rather backward Courſe, render'd greatly noxious, in choaking up one of the moſt famous Rivers in the Kingdom.

After it became a common Obſervation, what Prejudice the *Cambridge* River ſuffer'd by the aukward and unnatural Courſe of the *Bedford* Land-floods, (as deſcrib'd before:) The Corporation of *Lenne* foreſeeing that their Navigation to *Cambridge*, *Ely*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, *Thetford*, *Bury*, *Stoke*, &c. would thereby in time be utterly loſt, the Mayor of *Lenne* wrote to the Corporation of Adventurers then ſitting at *Ely*, the following Letter concerning the ſame.

GENTLEMEN, King's-Lyn, April 3. 1721.

A. D. 1721. *The Mayor of Lyn's Letter to the Adventurers, about the Silting up of the Rivers.*

THE great Danger of the Loſs of our Navigation to Cambridge, *by the Land-Floods of the Hundred-foot Drain falling with the Tides from Sea into the River of great* Ouſe *at* Denver, *ſilting up that River above the Reach and Return of the Ebb, being repreſented to the Gentlemen of this Society at their Common Hall, with Inſtances of Demonſtration; I am deſired by them to communicate it to your Corporation, at their general Meeting, as a Matter of the higheſt Importance, worthy your Enquiry and Examination. And in behalf of this Corporation earneſtly to deſire you'll vouchſafe ſuch due Care to be taken therein, as ſo weighty an Affair may neceſſarily require. This is directed to be preſented to you by the*

Hands of one of our Chamberlains, with greateſt Reſpect from our Body, and particulary from,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt humble Servant,

EDM. ROLFE, Mayor.

AT a Court held by Adjournment, on *Thurſday* the Firſt of *June*, 1721. in the Evening, at the *Fen-Office* in the *Inner-Temple*, *London*. Preſent

Bailiffs.

John Chicheley, Eſq;——*Francis Pemberton*, Eſq;——*John Walſham*, Eſq;

Conſervators.

Geo. Keate, Eſq; *William Cole*, Jun. Gent.
Mr. *Ja. Fortry*, Mr *John Le Pla.*

" The Court proceeded to take into Conſideration the Complaints ſet forth in " the Letter of the Mayor of *Lyn*, concerning which Mr. Surveyor-General was " directed at laſt *Ely* Meeting to take a View; with the Aſſiſtance of Mr. *Cole* " and Mr. *Saffery*. And reading the Order made at the ſaid *Ely* Meeting, and " hearing Mr. Surveyor-General his Report, with the Opinion of Mr. *Rowley*, " who aſſiſted in the View, and took all the Soundings from *Clayhith* to *Lenne*: *This Court is of Opinion, that ſo much of the Rivers of* Grant *and* Ouſe, *as run within the Bounds of this Corporation, are in a Condition ſufficient for the Navigation thereof; and do order, That Mr. Surveyor-General do acquaint the Mayor of* Lyn *with their Enquiry and Opinion.*

The Adventurers Anſwer.

W. PLAXTON, Dep. Reg.

There being, according to this Report, a Depth of Water in the *Cambridge* River ſufficient for Navigation four Years ago, *viz. Anno* 1721. but now at this Time, *Anno* 1725. not one Foot Water at Low-water Mark, a little above *Salters-lode*, or beyond *Denver* Sluices, and that Water above the Soil of the Fens, (where the River was ten Foot under Soil) whereby Navigation is obſtructed and loſt during the Neip-Tides in the ſaid River and Rivers above the Remains of the Sluices, it ſhews how greatly the *Cambridge* River grows and ſilts up yearly; and as this River hath its Bottom thus raiſed higher and higher by degrees with Sand from Sea, it thereby receiving the leſs Water from the Tides to ſcour out the *Ouſe*, that famous River, its Channel and Outfall, ſilts up by degrees too, inſomuch that at this preſent time, at *Low-water Mark*, *the Water is not eight Inches deep in many Parts of the River, and its Bottom in many Places is as high, or higher, than the Soil of the Fens*, (ſo that the Fens cannot drain) nor can there be any Navigation maintain'd between *Lenne* and the Country during the Neip-Tides, becauſe the Bottom of the River from *Stow* upwards is in many Places too high for the Neip-Tides to reach; and I have ſeen Gangs of Barges lye a-ground ſeveral Days together, and wait till the Spring-Tides put up.

And in *Lenne-haven* the Channel is ſo ſhallow, that People frequently ride and walk over, where anciently Ships uſed to ride afloat at Low-water. And in the Channel to Seaward there is but 2, 3, 4, 5 Foot Water, ſo that no Ships can come up to *Lenne* but with Spring-Tides; whereas before *Denver* Sluices were erected, they could ſail between *Lyn* and the Sea with Neip-Tides—— And the Roads *Filmne* and *Ferrier* are quite grown up, where Ships uſed to ride in three or four Fathom Water; and now the Ships ride at Anchor as low down as the *Well* or *Lenne* Deeps.

Thus the Ship Roads and Channels below *Lenne* ſuffer as much as the River above; ſo that no Ships can come up to *Lenne* during the Neips, any more than Barges can go from *Lenne* to *Cambridge*, *Bedford*, &c. during the Neips. Such Prejudice has Navigation received already. And of ſuch Diſadvantage have the Works for Draining been to Draining——That the great Level of the Fens (before the Undertaking good Summer Lands, and which the Adventurers were

to

that in every ordinary Spring-Tide, the Floods from Sea that put up the *Bedford* River, do Ebb, or begin to return back again above an Hour ſooner than the Ebb begins in the *Cambridge* River, and during that time run up that River with the Tide, the Tide flowing above an Hour longer in the *Cambridge*, than in the *Bedford* River.

And in every high Spring-Tide, the Flood runs two Hours longer up the *Cambridge* River than up the *Bedford*; and during theſe two Hours returns back again down the *Bedford*, and with the Tide runs up the *Cambridge* River with additional Silt and Sand.

And in Raking-Tides, the Ebb of the Sea-water which had put up the *Bedford* River, and indeed the freſh Waters following that Ebb, run up the *Cambridge* River perpetually, and does not return back again at all, while thoſe extraordinary high Tides continue; of which the Town Pilot of *Lenne*, and the eldeſt Bridgman of that Port, were with me Eye-witneſs; ſo that high Tides which ſcour out all other Rivers, choak this up. And the River not being Imbanked above *Littleport* on the *Weſt* Side, and the Waters of *Ouſe* being ſtopt by the *Hermitage* Sluice at *Erith*, and ſo turned down the *Bedford* River, and conſequently ſcarcely any freſh Waters in the River above *Denver* to incorporate with the Tides, there is ſuch an Indraught for the Floods from Sea, and the Ebbs of the Hundred-foot Waters which run with them up the *Cambridge* River, that they all of them keep running forward through *Ely* Bridge three or four Days together without any return; this Mr. *Bateſon* was an Eye-witneſs of: And they whoſe Buſineſs is upon the River affirm, it conſtantly does ſo every high Tide; and at *Stretham* the Ferry-man affirmed, at the time of our obſerving at *Denver* and *Ely*, &c. that the Waters continued riſing there ſeveral Days together, *&c.*

Cauſe of Cambridge River ſilting up.

This Water receiv'd above *Denver*, not ebbing back again till after the Spring-Tides begin to fall off, as 'tis impoſſible they ſhould, being over-rid by the Waters of the new *Bedford* River, the Silt and Sand brought up with thoſe Tides from Sea, and the Ebbs of *Bedford* Waters doubly ſiltey joining them, ſubſide and remain fixed to the Bottom of *Cambridge* River; inſomuch that Mr. *Stafford* of *Denver* affirms, that the ſaid River between *Denver* and *Littleport* ſilted up one Foot this preſent Year. And indeed it naturally muſt be ſo: For theſe Spring-Tides putting up the *Cambridge* River, having ſcarcely any Land-waters to be rais'd above their natural Situation, ſo as to acquire a Weight ſufficient to ſcour out the Silt the Sea-waters leave, therefore the ſaid Silt or Sand remains in the Bottom of the River, and increaſeth every Spring-Tide between *Denver* and *Ely*, and as high as thoſe Tides reach.

This unnatural Effect is altogether owing to the Hundred-foot Drain, or (as it is ſometimes call'd) the New *Bedford* River: For the Spring-Tides and Land-Floods which naturally ſcour out all other Rivers, keep open their Channels, and maintain their Outfalls to Sea, are here, by the indirect, or rather backward Courſe, render'd greatly noxious, in choaking up one of the moſt famous Rivers in the Kingdom.

After it became a common Obſervation, what Prejudice the *Cambridge* River ſuffer'd by the aukward and unnatural Courſe of the *Bedford* Land-floods, (as deſcrib'd before:) The Corporation of *Lenne* foreſeeing that their Navigation to *Cambridge*, *Ely*, *Mildenhall*, *Brandon*, *Thetford*, *Bury*, *Stoke*, &c. would thereby in time be utterly loſt, the Mayor of *Lenne* wrote to the Corporation of Adventurers then ſitting at *Ely*, the following Letter concerning the ſame.

GENTLEMEN, King's-Lyn, April 3. 1721.

A. D. 1721. *The Mayor of* Lyn's *Letter to the Adventurers, about the Silting up of the Rivers.*

THE great Danger of the Loſs of our Navigation to Cambridge, *by the Land-Floods of the Hundred-foot Drain falling with the Tides from Sea into the River of great* Ouſe *at* Denver, *ſilting up that River above the Reach and Return of the Ebb, being repreſented to the Gentlemen of this Society at their Common Hall, with Inſtances of Demonſtration; I am deſired by them to communicate it to your Corporation, at their general Meeting, as a Matter of the higheſt Importance, worthy your Enquiry and Examination. And in behalf of this Corporation earneſtly to deſire you'll vouchſafe ſuch due Care to be taken therein, as ſo weighty an Affair may neceſſarily require. This is directed to be preſented to you by the*

Hands

Hands of one of our Chamberlains, with greateſt Reſpect from our Body, and particulary from,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt humble Servant,

EDM. ROLFE, Mayor.

AT a Court held by Adjournment, on *Thurſday* the Firſt of *June*, 1721. in the Evening, at the *Fen-Office* in the *Inner-Temple*, *London*. Preſent

Bailiffs.

John Chicheley, Eſq;——*Francis Pemberton*, Eſq;——*John Walſham*, Eſq;

Conſervators.

Geo. Keate, Eſq; *William Cole*, Jun. Gent.
Mr. *Ja. Fortry*, Mr *John Le Pla.*

" The Court proceeded to take into Conſideration the Complaints ſet forth in " the Letter of the Mayor of *Lyn*, concerning which Mr. Surveyor-General was " directed at laſt *Ely* Meeting to take a View; with the Aſſiſtance of Mr. *Cole* " and Mr. *Saffery*. And reading the Order made at the ſaid *Ely* Meeting, and " hearing Mr. Surveyor-General his Report, with the Opinion of Mr. *Rowley*, " who aſſiſted in the View, and took all the Soundings from *Clayhith* to *Lenne*: *This Court is of Opinion, that ſo much of the Rivers of* Grant *and* Ouſe, *as run within the Bounds of this Corporation, are in a Condition ſufficient for the Navigation thereof; and do order, That Mr. Surveyor-General do acquaint the Mayor of* Lyn *with their Enquiry and Opinion.*

The Adventurers Anſwer.

W. PLAXTON, Dep. Reg.

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to

to make good Winter Lands) are by means of their Works become (eſpecially thoſe Lands for whoſe Sake *Denver* Sluices were made) a perfect *Lerna*, a ſtanding Pool of Water, and ſo they muſt continue.

And not only the Fens ſuffer hereby, but much of the adjacent Country, and all the Low-Lands in the *Wiggenhalls* and in Marſhland; for tho' that Province is defended from the Body of the Fen Waters by the *Powdyke*, yet they are drowned in their own Downfall Water, and the Fen Water, which is unjuſtly let in upon them by the Adventurers through *Tong*'s Drain; and which they can't run off, becauſe the River *Ouſe*, their ancient and natural Outfall, is grown up too high for them to drain by: Therefore Marſhland (as Things now ſtand) runs a double Riſque of Inundation.——Firſt, from the Land Waters, which overflow the Fens, and riſe high againſt the *Powdike* in time of Floods, whereby the ſaid *Powdike* is in danger to be rent and torn, undermin'd and blown up. For the Waters being dilated and ſpread over a great Level, off which they cannot run, the Wind will have Power to raiſe ſuch violent Waves againſt the *Powdike*, as will break and tear it to pieces. This all indifferent Men who have Experience of the Fens apprehend: For it is well known there was a Bank between *Upwell* and *Welney* four Miles long made to preſerve *Londoners* Fen, which Bank by its often tearing, breaking and blowing up, after great Sums of Money expended, it wearied out the Undertakers; and yet the Waters aroſe not at any time above three Foot in height in the Level againſt that Bank, they having Liberty to ſpread themſelves over the great Level of the Fens. From whence it muſt be concluded, that now all the Outfalls of the Level are loſt to draining, the Fen Waters riſe high againſt Marſhland Banks, they by their Weight and the Beat of the Waves will, one time or other, tear, rend, and blow up the *Powdike*, and utterly deſtroy Marſhland, unleſs the River *Ouſe* be reſtored to its ancient Depth.

Marſhland runs a double Riſque of Inundation.

A ſecond Riſque of Inundation this Province runs is from the Sea, for if thro' the Rage of its Tides, a Breach of Bank ſhould happen at the Frontier Town of *Terrington*, (where many have happen'd) that whole Province, or the greater Part of it muſt be ſurrounded with Salt-waters, for want of their ancient Drains to run it off again into *Ouſe*, to the total Deſolation of that fruitful Country, and the utter Ruin of its numerous Inhabitants.

And as I have proved, that thoſe Spring-Tides and Land-Floods which ſcour all other Rivers, keep open their Channels, and maintain their Outfals, are moſt unnaturally prejudicial to this River *Ouſe*; as thoſe very means, which according to the Laws of Motion eſtabliſhed by Divine Wiſdom in the Nature of Things, have their proper Effect on all other Rivers, and which they had on the River *Ouſe* whilſt left in its natural Courſe, now prove ruinous and deſtructive to the River; from Experience and from parity of Reaſon it is demonſtrable, that the Navigation up *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall* and *Grant*, or *Cambridge* Rivers, muſt in a very few Years be loſt: And which the following Affidavit proves beyond Contradiction.

Affidavit of the awkward Courſe of the Land Floods.

January *the* 20th, 1723. John Fuller *Beakner and Maſter Pilot of the Port of* King's-Lyn——*Captain* John Edwards, *and Captain* Samuel Long, *Maſters and Commanders of Ships of the ſaid Port, and* Thomas Badeſlade, *Gent. Surveyor and Profeſſor of the Mathematicks, do ſeverally make Oath, That they at the Requeſt, and by the Direction of the Mayor and chief Magiſtrates of the Burgh and Port of* Lyn *aforeſaid, did on* Monday *the Twentieth Day of* January *Inſtant, take a View, and ſurvey that Part of the River of* Great Ouſe, *that is adjacent to the Place where* Denver *Sluice lately ſtood, and were there three Hours before Flood from Sea: Where they were met by* William Stafford, *Eſq; and Mr.* Peter Bateſon; *and all of them did obſerve, and do certify and report, That the freſh Floods deſcending the Hundred-foot Drain, (otherwiſe called* Bedford *River) inſtead of having its due Courſe toward the Sea, did run violently through the Remains of* Denver *Sluices toward* Ely *and* Cambridge, *at the time of our firſt coming thither, and continued ſo to do till the Flood-Tide from Sea came up to that Place, and then both the Tide from Sea and Land-flood united, and ran together toward* Cambridge. *But the Tide did not put up, or ſet into the Hundred-foot River at all.*

And

And do farther certify and report, that they were informed by the Ferry-men, who conſtantly attend the Ferry there, and others inhabiting in thoſe Parts, that the Tides and Land-Floods had continued to run in that Manner or Courſe toward Cambridge, *for at leaſt a Week together before our ſaid View, without any manner of return to Seaward.*

That theſe Deponents did all of them ride about one Mile up the ſaid Bedford *River Bank, to a Croſs Bank in the Waſhes, and did there obſerve the ſaid Waſhes, which are above half a Mile over, and* 20 *Miles in length covered with a great Depth of Water; and have good reaſon to believe, the Flood will ſtill continue running up toward* Cambridge *for ſome time longer. And do believe and aſſert, that unleſs ſome ſpeedy Means be uſed to prevent theſe Land-Floods from this aukward Courſe, contrary to their natural Outfal to Sea, the River to* Cambridge *will by them and the Tides be entirely ſilted up, and in a ſhort time both Navigation and Draining be wholly loſt,* &c.

Jurat apud Lenn Regis in
Com. Norff. 22. die Jan.
Coram me
Edm. Rolfe.

John Fuller, John Edwards,
Sam. Long, Tho. Badeſlade,
W. Stafford, Peter Bateſon.

And *January* the 26th Inſtant, we were at *Denver* Sluices again about one Hour before Flood from Sea, and then obſerved that the Waters deſcending the *Bedford* River, continued running through the Remains of the Sluices towards *Cambridge*; and the Ferry-man told us, there had not been any return of Water out of *Cambridge* River toward the Outfal by *Lyn*, ſince we were there on the 20th Inſtant. We at the ſame time obſerved, that though the Land-waters in the Hundred-foot Drain were abated and ſettled one Foot at the Mouth, ſince the 20th, yet the Water kept riſing in the *Cambridge* River, and had ſwell'd ſince the 20th 8 Inches; ſo that 'tis plain, the Waters which deſcend the *Bedford* River, flow through the Remains of the Sluices towards *Cambridge*, as long as the Land-Floods continue.

The Fens drowned to a great Depth.

Theſe Waters ſo running up the *Cambridge* River, topt and overflow'd the Banks of that River on the *Eaſt* Side, in many Places between *Littleport-Chair* and *Ely*; as alſo the Banks of ſome of the other Rivers that have their Courſe through the *South* Level, inſomuch that the Level is drowned to a great Depth, and the Surface of the Water that ſurrounded it, is even with the Surface of the Water in the Rivers.

Obſervations of the drowned Condition of the Fens.

At *Ely* we obſerv'd, (though the Land-Floods deſcending the *Bedford* River, ran violently through the Remains of *Denver* Sluices toward *Cambridge*, yet) the Floods deſcending from *Cambridge* through *Grant* River, ran with a ſtrong Current through *Ely* Bridge, and kept that Courſe to about five Miles below *Ely*, where it met with the *Bedford* Waters; and there reſiſting each other, they riſe high, top the Banks of the *South* Level, and drown it to a great Depth: And as Low-water Mark in the River *Ouſe*, was in *Auguſt* laſt (when the Water was lower than at any other time of the Year) above one Foot higher than the Soil of the Fens; ſo as the Bottom of the River is raiſed higher every Year, the Fens will be more drowned every Year. And as this laſt Winter's Land-Floods, which began to turn up the *Cambridge* River in *January*, and continued that aukward Courſe near a Month, laid another *Stratum* of Silt and Sand above *Denver*; the Fens, particularly in the *South* Level, the Waters will be hemm'd in by this Bar of Sands, and the Lands be rendred utterly unprofitable; for they are drown'd to ſuch a Depth, that the Sun cannot exhale the Waters, nor dry them up: And from *Haddenham* Hills in our View of the Fens, we obſerv'd, they were all to the *South* and *Eaſt* bright, excepting here and there a Reed or ſallow Buſh, and ſome ſmall Tract of Grounds which appeared above the Waters; and thoſe heretofore rich Meadows from *Audrey* Bridge to *Stretham* Ferry, we found drowned on both ſides of the River. At *Stretham* Ferry we took Boat, and went to Sir *Roger Jennyn*'s Engine Mile, which is placed upon a great Drain belonging to *Cottenham*; thoſe very Lands which this Engine is intended to drain, (and which was heretofore rich Meadow) we found drowned; as were the Fens of *Stretham*, *Landbeach* and *Waterbeach*, &c. From *Stretham* Ferry to *Harrimere* all drowned; and beyond *Harrimere*, on the *Eaſt* of the Rivers *Grant* and *Ouſe*, all the Fens and Low-lands as far as the Pariſh of *South Lyn*, were in the ſame

 ſopp'd

ſopp'd Condition. About *Ely* the Fens ſo overflow'd, that moſt of the Market People come from *Soham* to *Ely* by Boat over the Fens.

All thoſe formerly fine River Meadows from *Erith* to *Harrimere* being almoſt continually ſopp'd, are (even after the Waters are ſuckt up by the Sun) become very courſe, and conſequently of far leſs value then they were before the Adventureſhip; and the Reaſon is plain, becauſe then the Land-Floods paſſed quickly over them, to a good Outfal (now decay'd) doing good in their Paſſage, by dropping the rich Soil of the high Countries upon them; but now for want of a good Outfal, they ſtay ſo long, as to eat out the Heart and Goodneſs of the Ground.

Tho' they were formerly rich valuable Land, and now are render'd but of little profit; yet ſo ignorant are the Landholders for the moſt Part, that they declared they would agree to lay Eight-pence *per* Acre on all the Fens thereabouts, to oppoſe any Bill that may be brought into Parliament, for putting the *Ouſe* into the Channel it had when the ſaid Fens were in a flouriſhing Condition. It was rightly obſerved by Sir *Clement Edmonds*, in his Report to the Lords of the Council, concerning the Draining of the Fens —— *That he that will do any good in Sewing, muſt do it againſt the Will of ſuch as ſhall have Profit by it.*

In our Perambulation up the 100 Foot, we took notice of the Condition of the *Eaſt* Part of the Middle Level, and of the *Weſt Part* of the *South* Level, by its own Downfall, to be plaſhy, courſe, and ruſhy throughout; and in our return found from *Littleport* to *Denver*, that Side to be much in the ſame Condition with the other Side next the 100 Foot.

Mr. *Stafford* waited on a Gentleman, who told him, that his Lands in the *Weſt* Part of the *South* Level, by its Downfall and Sock, for want of an Outfal, are made ſo coarſe and ruſhy, that he let them from 2 to 3 *s.* 4 *d. per* Acre, which were in former times let for 8 to 10 *s. per* Acre; and that he had a Rental of his *Littleport* Eſtate in his Grandfathers Time of 1500 *l. per Ann.* now about 600 *l. per Ann.* —— In his Lands, for about two Miles in length, above the *Chain* Farm, we did not ſee one Stack of Hay, nor any Cattle in them except four Horſes; and at the *Chain* were told, thoſe Lands were moſt untenanted; and we found the *Chain* Farm that has a Mill, drowned.

The ſame Gentleman ſhew'd Mr. *Stafford* a Paper his Grandfather left for his Poſterity; wherein he ſays, if any Emergencies ſhould happen to oblige to ſell, that the *Littleport* Eſtate be reſerved for the laſt; for there may come a Time for that Eſtate to be of the ſame Value it was before the Adventurers had any Concerns in the Fens; to whom he was always averſe, and had juſt reaſon to be ſo.

As the Fens are thus overflow'd, and a great Part of them render'd utterly unprofitable, the Revenue of the Adventurers Taxes rais'd upon the 95,000 Acres, to maintain the Works of Draining, and pay their Officers Salaries, is proportionably diminiſhed; and was it not for a great Number of the Landholders throwing the Fen Waters over Banks into the River and Drains, by Engines made at their own Expence; they ſay, the whole Body of the Fens would become unprofitable, and Taxes enough could not be rais'd to maintain the Works, and to pay Salaries.

The Salaries, *&c.* amount to above 900 *l. per Ann. viz.*

	l.
Surveyor-General —— —— ——	200
Receiver-General —— ——	100
Deputy-Receiver —— ——	30
Auditor —— —— —— —— ——	50
His Itinerant Charges —— ——	5
Regiſter —— —— —— —— ——	60
His Itinerant Charges —— ——	5
Surveyor of the *South* Level ——	70
Deputy Surveyor —— ——	30
Two Surveyors of the Middle Level —— —— ——	100
Surveyor of the *North* Level ——	60
Sluice-Keepers of the *North* Level	40
Ditto of the *South* and Middle Level	60
The Charge of the Fen-Office in the *Temple* —— —— ——	60
Allow'd to the Treaſurer for the Entertainment of the Corporation Officers, *&c.* at the Audit and Meeting yearly in *April*, about —— —— ——	10
The Mace-Bearer —— —— ——	05
Sum total *per Ann.* ——	985

And

And the Works of Draining, were they all maintain'd that the Corporation charge themſelves with, as they ought to be, are very great, *viz.*

Works the Adventurers maintain in the North Level.

The Banks, Rivers, and Drains maintain'd by the Corporation of Adventurers * in the *North Level*, which Diviſion of the Fens lieth between the River *Welland* and *Morton*'s *Leam*, and bears in Proportion of the Draining Taxes of the whole 95,000 Acres, about a Sixth Part of the Tax.

The Bank againſt *Welland* River from *Peakirk* to the Bars at the *Weſt* End of *Crowland*, and the *Weer Dike* to the ſame.

Wearington new Drain, with its Banks and Weer Dikes.

The Drain called the *Stoor-nook* Drain, from *Stoor-nook* to the Adventurers Lands in *Borrow-great* Fen, and from thence by the *Outring* Dike of the ſaid Adventurers Lands to the *Eaſt* Corner thereof; and from thence by the *Pepper Lake* to new *South Eea*, to *Clows-Croſs*, and from thence by the *Shier* Drain to the Sea.

The *Wride* Stream.

The Eighteen-foot Drain through *Murrow* Common to *Clows-Croſs*.

Thorney Dike from *Catwater* by *Willow-Hall*, as far as the Saſs in the *North* Bank of *Morton*'s *Leam*.

The *North* Bank of *Morton*'s *Leam*.

Middle Level.

The *Middle Level* lieth between *Morton*'s *Leam* and *Bedford* River, and bears in Proportion of the Draining Taxes about a twenty fifth Part.

The Banks, Rivers, or Drains, in this Part of the Level, now maintain'd by the Corporation, are

The *South* Bank of *Morton*'s *Leam*, and *Wear Dikes*.

Stanground Saſs.

The old Courſe of the River *Nene* from *Standground Saſs* to *Well-Creek Saſs*, with the *Saſſes* at *Flood*'s Ferry near *Whittleſey Dikes End*, and the *Saſs* at the lower End of *Well-Creek*.

Wittleſey Dike.

Bevil's *Leam* from *Wittleſey Meer* to the *Saſs* near *Baldwin*. *Gloſſom*'s Houſe, at the lower End of *Walderſea* Receptacle.

Moor's Drain from *Bevil*'s *Leam* to the old *Nene* below *Marc*.

The *Delf Dike* from *Wittleſey* to the old *Nene*.

New *Dike* from *Connington* Brook at the upper Corner of to *Hook-Lode*.

Hook-Lode to the old *Nene* by *Burbridge* Stream into the old *Nene*.

Monk's *Lode*.

The Drain from *Raveley*'s *Nook* to *Burbridge* Stream, between *Wood-walton* Common, and *Ramſey* and *Raveley* Common.

The Forty-foot Drain from the *Weſt Outring Dike* of the Adventurers Lands, taken out of *Doddington*, *Warbois*, *Ramſey*, &c. to *Welch*'s Dam.

The *Weſt* Water from the Forty-foot through *Benwick*.

The Drain leading from *Chatteris* Ferry to *Slade* Gate, and ſo to the Forty-foot Drain.

The Twenty-foot Drain from *Erith* Common to *Well-Creek*, with the Bank thereof, and Sluices therein.

That Part of the *Weſt* Water from *Somerſham* Town by *Holwoods* and *Middle Moor*, and ſo to the *Counter-Waſh* between the Twenty-foot Bank and the *Weſt* Bank of *Bedford* River, with the Sluices and Tunnels therein.

Hammond's *Eea* from the Adventurers Lands in *Somerſham-high* Fen to the Twenty-foot Drain aforeſaid.

Old *Bedford* River, with the Bank thereof, from *Erith* to the old *Ouſe*, with the Sluices thereunto belonging.

South Level.

The *South Level* is from old *Bedford* River to *Stoke*, *Feltwell*, *Mildenhall*, and that Part of the Upland Country adjoining, and bears in proportion to the Draining Taxes about a ſeventeenth Part.

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* Tranſcribed from the Hiſtory or Narrative of the Great Level of the Fens, call'd *Bedford* Level; written by *Samuel Fortrey*, Eſq; Surveyor of the Middle Level: Publiſhed, *A. D.* 1685. This Book has been allow'd in Evidence.

The

The Banks, Rivers and Drains in this Level, maintained by the ſaid Corporation, are as followeth, *viz.*

South Bank of the River *Ouſe*, from the hard Lands of *Swacey*, &c. to the *Hermitage*, and the Saſs or Sluice there.

The River called *New Bedford* River, from the *Hermitage* to *Salters-lode*, with the Banks, Forelands, Wear-dikes and Sluices thereof.

The Drain that leads from *Ewel* Fen to *Audrey* Cauſeway, and from thence into the Old *Ouſe* at *Audrey* Bridge.

Grunty Fen Drain, from *Grunty* Fen to the Old *Ouſe*, at *Littleport-chair*, with its Banks.

Part of Old *Welney* River.

Littleport Drain.

Maid-lode and *Modney* Drain, with the Sluices to the ſame.

The Drain that carries away *Hogginton* Brook, with the Banks to be raiſed.

The River Grant *from* Clayhith *to* Harrimere, *with the Banks, Forelands, Were-dikes, and Sluices thereof.*

The Banks of Old Ouſe, *from* Harrimere *to* Chitterings.

The New long Drain from *Wicken-high* Fen to the *Tunnel*, under *Soham* New River, and ſo to the *Tunnel* under *Mildenhall* River; from thence to the *Tunnel* under *Brandon* River, and ſo to the *Tunnel* under *Stoke* River; and from thence through *Downham Eea* to the Sluice, at the lower End thereof near *Stow* Bridge.

The Eaſt *Banks of* Ouſe, *from* Harrimere *to the* Brick *Sluice, at* Prich-willow, *within the Wear-dyke thereof.*

The new Bank on the Weſt *Side of the River* Ouſe *from* Harrimere *to* Ely *High-Bridge.*

The Drains from the *Eaſt* End of the Adventurers Lands, taken out of *Soham* Common to the *Wear-Dike* of *Mildenhall* River.

Mildenhall *River with the Banks, Forelands, and Wear-Dikes thereof.*

The Eaſt *Banks of the River* Ouſe, *from* Mildenhall *River to the Sluice at the lower End of* Mildenhall *Drain near* Littleport-chair.

Mildenhall Drain, from the laſt mentioned Sluice to *Mildenhall* Common.

The River Ouſe *with the Banks, Forelands, Wear-Dikes, Sluices, and Tunnels thereof, from* Littleport-chair *to* Denver *Dam*, excepting the Sluices, Tunnels, and Water-Works heretofore made and maintain'd by *Edmond Skipwith*, Eſq; deceas'd, and other particular Owners of Lands within or near the ſaid great Level, for his or their own paivate Benefit.

Lakenheath Drain from *Wainsford* Brook to the Tunnel under *Lakenheath New-Lode*, and ſo to the Tunnels under *Brandon* River.

Brandon *River with the Banks, Forelands, and Wear-Dikes thereto belonging.*

Feltwell Drain to its Outfall into the River of *Ouſe* at *Palmer*'s Houſe.

Sam's Cut from *Feltwell* to the River *Ouſe.*

Stoke *River with the Banks, Forelands, Wear-Dikes, and Sluices.*

A Tunnel under *Methwold-lode* for the draining of *Norwold* Fens.

Roxham Drain with the Banks thereof.

Theſe Works and Drains are, from time to time, preſerved and maintained at the Coſts and Charges of the ſaid Corporation and their Succeſſors, Owners of the ſaid 95,000 Acres mentioned in the Act 15. *Car.* 2. and not by the Owners of any the Lands within the ſaid great Level, other than of the ſaid 95,000 Acres; except in Caſes where particular Contracts have been made by the ſaid Corporation.

So far this Author.

How well theſe Works are maintain'd, appear by the Petitions and the Caſe of the Landholders in *Sect.* 6. and by the drowned Condition of the Fens.

Had the Works above-mention'd, particularly thoſe in the *South* Level, been taken care of, the Outfal to Sea would have been continually improv'd in its Depth, and that and the Middle Level would have been effectually drained and made Winter Lands, which the Adventurers by their Contract with the Country were obliged to make them.

But by the Neglect of theſe Works with which they charge themſelves, and by making inſufficient Works to ſave that Charge, and by the ſuffering thoſe Works too to grow into Decay and Ruin, the Land Floods ſpread all over the Fens, by which means their Weight and Action is loſt toward preſerving an Outfall to Sea; the Rivers are more and more choaked up; the Low-water Mark is raiſed higher in thoſe Rivers than the Surface of the adjacent Lands; in Conſequence whereof the Fens, and the adjacent Country, have been every ſucceeding Year drowned to a greater Height, and now are covered with ſuch a Depth of Water, as cannot be exhaled or dryed up, and therefore they muſt continue perpetually ſurrounded and overflow'd.

And the River *Ouſe*, *Lyn-haven*, and the Channel to Seaward, being depriv'd of this great quantity of Freſhes, which, had they their due Courſe, would ſcour out the Sands they are choaked with, with great Effect.

And the Bottom of the *Cambridge* River being raiſed higher every Year with Silt; and the leſs Water in Conſequence thereof, received into it (and the other Rivers) from Sea: I ſay, the due Courſe of the Freſhes being obſtructed more and more, and hinder'd from ſcouring the Outfall, and the Quantity of back Water (the chief Preſervation) growing leſs and leſs, as the *Cambridge* River grows up, 'tis demonſtrable, the Navigation muſt in a very few Years be loſt, (as Draining is already) unleſs the Methods laid down in the next *Section* be ſpeedily put in Practice.

And when they are, I make no doubt but this now ſurrounded great Level of the Fens will ſoon be recovered; the now choaked up Rivers, Haven and Channels reſtored to their ancient Depth; and Navigation and Draining, (whoſe true Intereſts are inſeparable) in a few Years be render'd abſolute and compleat.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Method that muſt be taken to reinſtate the River of Great Ouſe, Lyn-haven, *and the Channel to Seaward, in their ancient Depth, and render them abſolute and compleat for Navigation and Draining.---- How it will be effected if this Method be put in Practice, and in what time.*

The Fens, anciently Meadows, how they came drowned.

IN the foregoing Sections I have ſhewed ——That the Country now called *Bedford* Level, was not of ancient Time Fenny, but was in Nature River Meadow, till the Outfall by *Wisbech* (for Reaſons already given) decayed and became inſufficient to convey to Sea the Floods that deſcended from the Upland Countries in Winter time; in Conſequence of which deficiency, this Great Level became for the moſt Part overflow'd and ſurrounded, until *Great Ouſe* was let fall into *Ouſe parva*, (which was perhaps 800, or 1000 Years ſince) by a Cut made from *Littleport-chair* to *Rebeck*, (ſee *Hayward*'s Map) and its Waters had a new Courſe given them, *viz.* by *Salters-lode* through *Wiggenhale Eea*, and *Lyn-haven* to Sea. (Its former Courſe having been by *Wiſbech* to Sea.) *Wiggenhale Eea* and *Lyn-haven* were at that time very narrow; the firſt, (Tradition ſays) a Man could throw himſelf over with a Pike-Staff; the latter but ſix Poles, or 100 Feet wide. But after all, the Waters of *Great Ouſe*, &c. had their Paſſage by this Courſe, they by degrees wore the River wide, and gave the Sea a more ſpacious Inlet; *the one as it were preparing the Way, and the other maintaining it with much Increaſe.* By this alternate Action of the Land and Sea-waters, the River *Ouſe* and *Lyn-haven* and Channel were made by degrees ſo wide and deep, that they became famous for Navigation, and in a great Meaſure capable of conveying through them to Sea, the Waters deſcending from the high Countries, and would have effectually exicated the Fens, but the Floods deſcending the Rivers were obſtructed by Weers and Gravels. And the reſt wanted proper Drains, to guide them out of the Level into the *Ouſe*, and ſo to the Ocean through *Lyn-haven*; for the ancient Sewers were made to lead the Fen-waters to *Wisbech* River, when it was capable of paſſing them to Sea; but that decayed, thoſe Drains were no longer of Uſe, and there wanted new ones to lead the Downfall Waters to the new Outfall by *Lyn*.

The ſeveral different Undertakers to drain the Fens.

But the Commiſſioners of Sewers having by their ordinary Power no Authority to make new Drains, and they and the Inhabitants of theſe Parts differing about the making new Works, the Country during theſe Diſputes and Incapacities lay neglected; until Sir *John Popham*, Knight, Lord Chief Juſtice of *England* to King *James* I. Sir *Thomas Fleming*, Knight, Chief Baron of his Majeſties Court of *Exchequer*, and others, obtained an Act of Parliament to make *New Works*, in order to drain the ſaid Fens. And the Act directed, that they ſhould drain them in ſuch ſort, " *As the Navigation in* Ouſe *and* Grant *ſhould not be im-*
" *paired.* And that they ſhould *Imbank in all places needful*, Ouſe, Grant, Mil-
" denhall, Brandon, *and* Stoke *Rivers.*" But my Lord *Popham* died, *Anno* 1607. and this Undertaking with him.

About 1620. Sir *William Ayloff*, Bart. and *Anthony Thomas*, Eſq; made Propoſals to the King and Council for a ſecond Undertaking: Which were, " *To make dry*
" *the whole Level and Latitude of the Fens, without doing Prejudice to the Na-*
" *vigation between* Cambridge *and* Lyn, *or hurting the Port and Haven of* Lyn."
But they being ordered to give Security to the Country, and to ſhew the Commiſſioners of Sewers the Means by which they intended to accompliſh ſo great a Work, in default thereof they were rejected.

Hereupon King *James* himſelf undertook the Draining; but Affairs of State prevented his Majeſty's making any new Works.

After his Death, the Country and Commiſſioners of Sewers applied to *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, Owner of near 20,000 Acres in *Thorny* and *Wittleſey*; and he undertook the Draining by a Law of Sewers, made at *King's-Lyn*, *A. D.* 1630. And was to " *Drain the Fenny Grounds in ſuch Manner, as they ſhould be fit for*
" *Meadow, or Paſture, or Arable: And ſo, as that the Port and Harbour of*
" King's-Lyn *ſhould be preſerved, and the Navigation in all the navigable Rivers,*
" viz.

" viz. Ouſe, Grant, &c. *And no Prejudice, Annoyance, Hurt or Hindrance be* " *done to any of them, by means of the Works of Draining.*

The ſaid Earl and his Participants made ſeveral New Works, which much improved the Fens, yet were they ſubject to Inundation in the Winter Seaſon, and therefore his Undertaking was adjudged defective by the Commiſſioners of Sewers.

Then King *Charles* I. undertook to drain the Fens, and to make " *the Level* " *Winter Grounds,* " and made ſome new Works; but the Civil Wars prevented his Majeſty's proſecuting it with any Effect.

After his Death *William* Earl of *Bedford*, Son and Heir of the foreſaid *Francis*, reaſſumed this Undertaking. And by an Act he obtained of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *England*, *A. D.* 1649. he became the Undertaker for draining the Fens. And it was enacted, that " *He ſhould cauſe the ſame to be* " *drained and imbanked, without Prejudice to Navigation in the ſaid Rivers: And* " *all the ſaid Level ſhould be made Winter Grounds, in ſuch manner as the ſaid Ri-* " *vers or any of them ſhould not overflow the Grounds within the ſaid Level.*

And the ſaid Earl and his Participants proceeded; and after they had made ſeveral *New Works*, the Level was adjudged drained by the Commiſſioners appointed by the Act, and had 95,000 Acres ſet out to them for their Coſt and Pains. And as the Works of Draining could not be maintained without perpetual Care and orderly Government, the ſaid Earl obtained an Act of Parliament the 15 *Car.* 2. whereby he and his Participants were incorporated; in which Act it is provided, that if the " *ſaid Earl and his Participants, or the ſaid Corpora-* " *tion ſhall through or by reaſon of their Undertaking or Draining aforeſaid, have* " *done, or hereafter ſhall do any Act or Acts to the Prejudice of Navigation, and* " *whereby Navigation in the ſaid Rivers of* Ouſe *and* Grant, *&c. be, or here-* " *after ſhall be obſtructed and made worſe; that then the Commiſſioners named in* " *the Act, or any Seven of them,* &c. *ſhall Tax the ſaid* 95,000 *Acres in ſuch* " *Sums of Money as to their Judgments ſhall ſeem meet, for the making, preſerving,* " *and keeping the Navigation in any of the aforeſaid Rivers, as the ſame was in* " *the* 6th *Year of King* Charles I." *i. e.* as the ſame was before the Undertaking for Draining commenced.

As the Earl and his Participants undertook to make the Level Winter Grounds, it was expected they would have imbanked the Rivers that have their Courſe through the Fens, (as the Act of Parliament directed) and have led the Sock and Downfall Waters to the Rivers, by Drains ſluiced next the Rivers according to the Rules of Draining: But to ſave the Charge of ſuch Imbankments, they, contrary to the Rules of Draining, ſluiced the Rivers. Under Colour of the Act of 1649, they 1651—2. erected Sluices croſs the River of great *Ouſe*, near *Salters-lode*, to prevent the Tidal Flood from putting up into the Rivers *Ouſe*, *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall* and *Grant*. And alſo by means of another Sluice ſet croſs the *Ouſe* at the *Hermitage* near *Erith*, they turned the Waters of *Ouſe* down a new Cut they made, called *Hundred-foot Drain*, or *New Bedford River*; that ſo, nor Land-Floods deſcending the *Ouſe*, or Spring-Tides putting up the *Ouſe*, might go into any of thoſe Rivers, to the Riſque of drowning that Diviſion of the Fens at all. *Works made toward Draining.*

I have proved that that Diviſion of the Fens, though the loweſt Land in the whole Country was not hurtfully ſurrounded before thoſe Sluices were built; that Navigation was in a very flouriſhing Condition; and that the Rivet *Ouſe*, *Lyn-haven*, and the Channels to Seaward grew wider and deeper by Degrees, for eight, or more Hundred Years, to the great Improvement of Navigation and Draining, to the very Hour thoſe Sluices were erected.

And it is proved, that after they were built, the River below *Denver* Sluices, *Lyn-haven*, and the Channel to Seaward ſilted up, and was ſo choaked with Sand, for want of the ancient Stock of back Water to ſcour it out every Ebb of Tide, (as doth the Ebbs of the *Thames*, *Severn*, *Humber*, &c) that Navigation became immediately very much prejudiced. The Gools of Marſhland were choaked up, and great part of that Province drowned thereby; as were alſo the Hundreds and Parts adjacent to the River *Ouſe*.—— The *South* Level, for whoſe Benefit the Sluices were built, became ſurrounded, and Draining in the reſt of the Fens, became very precarious. And all this in one Year after theſe Works were executed: Inſomuch, *Prove Prejudicial.*

That

More Works made toward Draining.

That the Adventurers were forced to make (*Anno* 1653.) new Cuts from above *Denver* and *Salters-lode* Sluices, *viz. St. John*'s *Eea*, and *Tong*'s Drain, (ſee the Map of the Fens) to gain a better Fall for the Fen Waters into *Ouſe* nearer *Lyn*, but without ſucceſs; their Mouths being ſoon choaked up with Sand alſo; and theſe Cuts inſtead of being of uſe to Draining, they as Slakers gave occaſion to the Bottom of the River to grow up high as the Soil of the Fens, by which means it became utterly incapable of Draining the Fens, the Province of Marſhland, and the Hundreds and Parts adjacent to the River, and was almoſt loſt to Navigation, while *Denver* Sluices ſtood.—— And after thoſe Sluices were undermin'd by the Tides, and blow'd up, *Anno* 1713. the Waters deſcending the New *Bedford*, over-riding thoſe of *Cambridge* River, *&c.* that River was ſilted up Ten Feet in Four or Five Years time, and by means of the aukward Courſe of the *Bedford* Land-Floods, which inſtead of going to their natural Outfall to Sea by *Lyn*, take their Courſe through the Remains of *Denver* Sluices toward *Cambridge*, and overflow the *South* Level, which they do whenever they deſcend, and there they ſtagnate and do not run to *Lyn* to ſcour the River and Outfall; in conſequence whereof the Bottom of *Ouſe* is ſilted and raiſed ſo high with Sand from Sea, that the Neip Tides can flow but a very little way up that River; and therefore all Navigation is loſt during thoſe Tides, and the Low-water Mark is two Feet higher than the Soil of the Fens, (before *Denver* Sluices were built ten Feet under Soil) therefore incapable of receiving and paſſing to Sea any of the Fen Waters; and therefore the ſaid Fens are totally drowned the whole Year, (whereas before the Undertaking for a general Draining, there was hardly any part of the Fens but was Half-year Land, and moſt part in Nature River Meadow.)

Proves ineffectual.

The Fens totally drowned, and Navigation prejudiced.

And this now drowned Condition of the Fens is ſet forth by the Corporation of Adventurers, in a Piece publiſhed by them: Intitled, *A Report of the preſent State of the Great Level of the Fens, call'd* Bedford *Level, and of the Port of* Lyn, 1725. They ſay, *p.* 1. "The great Level of the Fens, called *Bedford* Le-
" vel, having for many Years paſt been greatly incommoded with Waters, to
" the very great Damage of that Country, occaſioned by the Mouths of their
" Rivers *Ouſe* and *Nene* being near ſilted up for many Miles from Sea; in con-
" ſequence of which, the great Land-Floods which paſs through this Country to
" Sea, not having ſufficient and ſpeedy Paſſage to their Outfalls, which lye
" at a very great Diſtance, and as before obſerved, near ſilted up, break down
" their Banks, and lay great part of the ſaid Fens under Water; and the Sea
" alſo having thus thrown its Sands into the Mouths of the aforeſaid Rivers,
" has quite ſilted up their Sluices by which they ſhould drain off their Soak.
" And the Waters being thus hemm'd in, and theſe Evils growing daily upon
" them, they are returning as faſt as poſſible to their old drowned State: So that
" if immediate Care be not taken to redreſs, if poſſible, theſe Evils the great
" Level of the Fens, the Port of *Lyn*, &c. will in a very little time be entirely
" loſt.

And the Province of *Marſhland*, the *Wiggenhalls*, and Hundreds and Parts adjacent, to the River *Ouſe*, which was all rich Land, and perpetually dry and whole Year Ground; their Drains heretofore leading their Downfall Water into the River *Ouſe*, before the Works for Draining; but now the Bottom of the River is raiſed too high to receive their Waters, ſo that beſide the Fens, a Country as valuable as the Fens lie drowned, occaſioned by the ſaid Works, and muſt be more and more ſurrounded, ſo long as any of thoſe Works they made in direct Oppoſition to Nature continue. Becauſe Spring-Tides and Land-floods, which according to the Laws of Motion, do keep open the *Thames* and *Humber*, (Rivers lying upon as foul Seas as doth the *Ouſe*) and having as many Sands at their Mouths as has the *Ouſe*, maintain their Channels, and preſerve their Outfalls, Spring-Tides and Land-Floods, which have that good Effect in them; do here, as I have proved, by means of thoſe Works, unnaturally contribute to the Ruin of this River. Therefore it is demonſtrable, that the Fens and the Hundreds and Parts adjacent muſt remain a ſtanding Pool, and Navigation be in a few Years quite loſt, unleſs theſe Works be deſerted, and in their ſtead ſome Method be executed, which will reinſtate the River *Ouſe*, and its Channels to Seaward in their ancient Depth.

And

Method to drain the Fens, and reſtore Navigation.

And that a right Method may be taken, free from the Uncertainty of former Undertakings, and the Riſque of fruitleſs Attempts, which Experience fatally ſhew, have been heretofore run; we made all theſe neceſſary Surveys of the Fen Rivers and their Outfalls to Sea, *&c.* and copied original Maps made of the Fens, before the Undertaking for a general Draining commenced. And to ſet this important Subject in its true Light, and to lead the Judgment of thoſe it concerns to a diſtinct and clear Idea, we traced the ancient and preſent State of Navigation and Draining, with the moſt impartial Care; which explores the Cauſe of the Misfortunes Navigation and Draining in theſe Parts labour under, and Points out the Remedy: For knowing how the Miſchief hath grown, that Experience naturally teaches us to prevent it for the future. Thus our Wiſdom is learn'd from other Mens Miſcarriages —— We at that time might have taken the ſame unfortunate Steps; for the Cauſes of Miſchiefs, and ſo the Remedies are oftentimes not perceived till the Miſchief is perfected.

It now being our Advantage to learn by other Mens Loſſes; the Condition of the Country, before they meddled with it ought to be known; and the Effect each Work they made had on Navigation and Draining, (which I therefore carefully traced in the foregoing *Sections*) ought to be throughly underſtood, elſe the Schemes of ignorant Men in this Affair, (otherwiſe ingenious) ſhew, how impoſſible it is for the moſt expert Artiſts, to lay down the Method that muſt be follow'd to reinſtate us.

The foregoing *Sections* make appear, that the only Reaſon why the Fens were at all drowned in Winter, at the Time of the Undertaking for a general Draining, was———There was not proper Drains made to convey the Waters of the Level into the main Stream, (*viz.* the River *Ouſe*) and alſo becauſe that River itſelf was from *Huntingdon* to *Ely* generally foul and overgrown with Weeds, ſtopp'd with Weers; and againſt *Ely*, as in other Parts, made ſhallow by Gravels and Fords. Had they been remov'd (as the Lord *Popham* and others propos'd) for the readier Paſſage of the Waters in time of Floods, it was at that time believ'd, the Fens would not have been hurtfully overflow'd by the Waters of *Ouſe*. This ſhews that the Fens cannot be drained, unleſs the principal River, which is *Ouſe*, be made ſo wide and deep, as to be capable of paſſing through it to Sea the Waters deſcending from the High-Countries.

Nature, in the Compaſs of a few Hundred Years, made the River *Ouſe* very wide and deep, compar'd with the Dimenſions it was of before *Wisbech* Waters had this Courſe given them; and continued to enlarge it in Width and Depth by degrees, until *Denver* Sluices were erected croſs it, beneath the Mouths of all the Rivers that have their Outfall by *Lyn*; which Sluices hindering the Tide from flowing into its ancient Receptacles, and the River, Haven and Channel to Seaward being thereby depriv'd of their wonted Stock of back Water to ſcour out the Silt or Sand in their Reflux, which the Tide brings up in the Flux, they were ſoon choaked with the ſaid Silt or Sand; ſo very ſoon, that *Lyn*, *Cambridge*, and the Inhabitants of the adjacent Parts, (as the Petitions ſhew) were throughly convinced, the ſaid Sluices were the Cauſe thereof. And for our part, we can't help being of Opinion, that if *Denver* Sluices had not been erected, Nature would her ſelf by this time, have made the River *Ouſe* and Outfall by *Lyn* ſo wide and deep, that there would have been room for the Fen Waters to paſs to Sea in Winter time; and that the Fens with proper Drains to convey their Downfall Waters into *Ouſe*, would have been perfectly exicated: Eſpecially if Art had been uſed to aſſiſt Nature by Imbankments, not to contradict her by ſluicing her Waters.

And it is our firm Opinion, that theſe Fens, tho' now they be totally drowned, will ſome few Ages hence (if the Method propoſed by Col. *Armſtrong* be executed) become good Meadow Land.

For conſidering that theſe Fens were when the Outfall by *Wisbech* was perfect, good and profitable Lands, but became Fenny by the ſame Degrees that that Outfall decay'd, until the New Outfall by *Lyn* was given them; and after that, they recover'd again, and became better and better drain'd, as the River *Ouſe* and *Lyn-haven* was worn by the new Confluence of freſh Waters, and additional Quantities of the Tide-water from Sea, wider and deeper, and thereby made a ſpacious Outlet for the Fen Waters: Until *Denver* Sluices were erected, and the Waters of *Ouſe* were turned out of their ancient Courſe, and in conſequence of

thoſe Works, the River, *&c*, immediately grew up, and the Fens became ſurrounded again, worſe than before this new Outfall was given them.

It is certain, if theſe Works be laid aſide, and the Old Courſe be given to the Waters of *Ouſe*, that as the River was worn from 6 to 40 Perches wide by thoſe Waters when they had that Courſe, and of a Depth proportionable thro' ſolid Land; when they have this natural Courſe again, they will ſcour out the Sand (which melts like Sugar, before a Spring-Tide) with great Effect, and by degrees wear the River, Haven and Channel wider and deeper. And as they are thus made larger, the Navigation will be improv'd, and the Fens will by the ſame Degrees be better and better drain'd; till at length this River, Haven and Channel, growing proportionably capacious as the *Thames*, *Humber*, &c. Navigation will become abſolute, and the Fens be more compleatly drained than ever they were, while the Outfall by *Wisbech* was perfect; by as much as the *Lyn* River is a lower Situation than the *Wisbech* River.

The only poſſible means of making the Tides and Freſhes capable (as they heretofore were) of working theſe uſeful and deſirable Effects, is to give Nature her way, and to aſſiſt her where needful; as is advis'd by the Honourable Col. *John Armſtrong*, His Majeſty's now Engineer General, in the Report he made to the Right Honourable *Robert Walpole*, Eſq; and to the Right Honourable *Henry* Earl of *Lincoln*, the 12th of *May*, 1724. *Viz.*

Col. Armſtrong's *Propoſals for Draining the Fens, and amending the Harbour of* Lyn.

1.—— *To open the Old* Ouſe *from* Harrimere *to* Hermitage *near* Erith, *to its ancient Breadth and Depth, and with the Earth that comes out of it, to form Banks on the Sides thereof, to prevent the Land-Floods or Freſhes overflowing the adjacent Lands in the Winter.*

2.—— *To remove the Gravels near* Stretham, *or where-ever elſe they are to be found in the River* Ouſe, *or other Impediments, to the End the Land-Floods, whenever they deſcend, may find out a quick Paſſage to Sea, and carry off all the Silt and Sand they meet in their way.*

3.——*To take up the Remains of* Denver *Sluices, or make a new Cut juſt by them, to render the River (now but* 80 *Feet wide) in this Place* 150 *Feet wide, as it formerly was; ſo that the Tides may have full Liberty to flow up by the* Ouſe *into their ancient Receptacles,* viz. *The Rivers* Stoke, Brandon, Mildenhall *and* Grant, *which will contain a ſufficient Indraught of back Water for deepning the* Ouſe *upon its return, and thereby reſtoring its Navigation within Land; as well as giving the Land-Floods when they deſcend, a ſwifter Paſſage to diſcharge themſelves by the Port of* Lyn *into the Sea.*

4.—— *To take up the Sluice or Saſs now at the* Hermitage *upon the River* Ouſe *near* Erith, *and if it ſhall be thought neceſſary, to ſet it down again in the New* Bedford *River, or* 100 *Feet Cut near the ſaid* Hermitage, *for the Benefit of Navigation only. And thereby to ſend the Land-Floods down the River* Ouſe, *their natural Channel, which muſt as afore-mentioned have good Effect; and prevent their deſcending for the future by the New* Bedford *River, and running unnaturally, as they for ſome Years paſt have been obſerv'd to do (for many Days together) to the great Damage of the River* Ouſe; *and if not timely remedy'd, will be the total Deſtruction of Navigation upon that River, and the other Rivers upward toward* Cambridge, *as it is already that of Draining.*

By this Method I am humbly of Opinion, that the Land-Floods, or Freſhes, being turn'd into the River Ouſe, *their natural Channel join'd to the Reflux of the Tide; which will now have a much larger Indraught for a back Water, than it hath had for many Years before; will infallibly deepen the* Ouſe *in a very little time to its ancient Depth, by driving out to Sea the Sand and Silt with which it is now very near choaked up; and thereby not only render all the Fens capable of being drained effectually, but all the Rivers that fall into it, will be, by being deepned, made capable of carrying as large Barges or Boats as ever they did heretofore; and beſides, it will deepen and clear out the Haven of* Lyn, *and the Channel from thence down to Sea.*

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

When

When this Method of Col. *Armſtrong*'s is executed, I conceive the River, Haven and Channel, will be ſoon reinſtated in their ancient Depth, in the following Manner.

How this Method will drain the Fens, and amend Lyn *Harbour.*

1ſt,—— The Land-Floods of the next Winter, (after this Work is done) when they deſcend from the Upland Countries their ancient Courſe, they will with their rapid Force and great Weight, ſcour out the Sand and Silt that now the River is choaked up with, with great Efficacy and Effect. This is certain; for while *Denver* Sluices ſtood, the Winter Floods deſcending the *Bedford* River, did always ſcour the Sands out of the River *Ouſe* to Sea during the time thoſe Floods laſted, though the River ſoon grew up again after the Floods were over, becauſe it was depriv'd of that Quantity of back Water, by *Denver* Sluices ſtopping the Tide out of all the River's ancient Receptacles for it, which did before thoſe Sluices were erected, and the Waters of *Ouſe* were turned out of their natural Courſe, in their Reflux (follow'd by the Land-waters which they rais'd above their natural Situation) not only keep open the River, Haven and Channel, as Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*, &c. well obſerves, but alſo did wear them wider and deeper by degrees, as Sir *Clement Edmunds* ſaith; and as the Petitions of *Marſhland* ſet forth; and the Experience of all former Ages teſtify.

2d,—— After the ſaid Freſhes have drove out to Sea the Top *Stratum* of Sand, and the Bottom of the River, *&c.* is thereby conſiderably ſunk, the Spring-Tides will be able to put up great Quantities of Water from Sea into the River *Ouſe*, *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall*, &c. which in its Reflux will have Weight and Action ſufficient to grind the River, Haven and Channel, deeper and deeper, and carry out the Sand to Sea; eſpecially as they will be followed by the freſh Waters which they'll raiſe above their natural Situation, and thereby give them Weight and Deſcent ſufficient to grind the River deeper: For this Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden* owns, the Spring-Tides did effect before *Denver* Sluices were erected.

And there is as much neceſſity for their doing ſo, as there is for any natural Cauſe to produce its proper Effect. For before it is full Sea at *Salters-lode*, the Waters begin to retreat to Sea from *Lyn-haven*; and before the Waters at *Salters-lode* can get back to *Lyn*, the Tide is ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel in *Lyn-haven* *, ſo that all the Waters of *Ouſe* towards *Salters-lode*, and of all the Rivers above *Salters-lode* fall back to Sea from a great Height, (*viz.* 14 Feet at *Salters-lode*) within the Compaſs of the Channel, with ſuch Rapidity, Force and Action, that as heretofore they were forced to Moor their Ships in *Lyn* Harbour with a Stream-Cable; and as this Weight and Action of the Reflux drove out the Sand to Sea, and gradually made the River, Haven and Channel wider and deeper, when the Tides and Freſhes had their natural Courſe; and as the Land-waters were rais'd by the Tidal Flood four Feet above their natural Situation at *Harrimere*; and as they following with acquir'd Deſcent at the Heel of the Sea-water, did clear the River of any Silt the Flood might bring with it, and alſo by degrees made the River *Ouſe* wider and deeper. So this Effect the Spring-Tides, *&c.* muſt naturally work again, when their wonted Courſe is given them. And thus ſome Sands being drove out to Sea by every Spring-Tide (364 of which happen in the Compaſs of one Year) and the Bottom of the River, Haven and Channel, in conſequence thereof ſinking lower and lower, they will by the Force of the Spring-Tides be ſunk ſo low under Soil, the firſt Summer after Col. *Armſtrong*'s Method is executed,

3d,—— That the Freſhes or Floods of the next Winter will, it is very natural to believe, drive out the remaining Sands to Sea, and regain the ancient Depth of the River *Ouſe*, *Lyn-haven*, and the Channels to Seaward.

Thus as the ſaid River, Haven and Channel was ſilted up, ruin'd to Draining, and render'd very precarious to Navigation, in two Years after *Denver* Sluices and the Hundred-feet Drain were made:—— I make no doubt, but in two Years after the Tides and Freſhes have their ancient and natural Courſe again, thoſe Laws of Motion which are eſtabliſhed by Divine Wiſdom in the Nature of Things, and which the Ebbing and Flowing Tides, *&c.* will then be govern'd by, will reinſtate the ſaid River, Haven and Channel, in their ancient Depth.

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* See the Obſervations on the Tides in the *Appendix*.

Nay, it is demonſtrable that it muſt be ſo—For as before the Waters of Great *Ouſe* were let fall into *Ouſe parva*, and had their Outfall given them by *Lyn*, the River from *Rebeck* downward, and the Haven of *Lyn* were ſo narrow, the firſt Tradition ſaith, a Man could throw himſelf over with a Pike-ſtaff.—— The latter but ſix Perches or 100 Feet wide, but were by the Force of thoſe Waters and the Tides worn ſo wide and deep, through ſolid Land and ſtiff Clay Shores, that at the time of the Undertaking for a general Draining, the River was 150 Feet wide at *Salters-lode*, and 14 Feet deep under Soil. (now high as the Soil)—— And the Harbour of *Lyn* 40 Perches, or 660 Feet wide, and the Bottom of its Channel above 30 Feet under Soil, (now little lower than the Soil): From Parity of Reaſon it muſt be concluded, that the Tides and Freſhes, when they have without Obſtruction the ſame Courſe they had in thoſe Times, they muſt drive out to Sea and clear the River, Haven and Channel, of looſe Silt and Sand; which will melt like Sugar, and incorporate with them; and in a very ſhort time make the River, *&c.* as deep as they were before *Denver* Sluices were erected, *&c.*

Then will the Fens (particularly the *South* Level) be effectually drained. For as before the Adventurers meddled with the Fens, and before they built *Denver* Sluices, to ſave the Charge of Imbanking the Rivers that have their Courſe through the *South* Level; that Diviſion of the Fens was —— The beſt part of it in Nature River Meadow —— the worſt of it good Summer Land, notwithſtanding there were in the principal River many Weers, Stamps, Gravels, and other Annoyances that ſtopped the Waters in their Courſe, made them riſe high and overflow great Part of the Country that was not Imbank'd in time of Flood; which Impediments to the Draining, had they been remov'd by the Adventurers, it was the Opinion of the Lord *Popham*, who undertook the Draining, *Anno* 1605. but died —— Of Mr. *Atkins*, who underſtood the Fens the beſt of any Man then living, and was much employ'd about 30 Years before the Adventureſhip —— Of Sir *Clement Edmunds*, who at the Requeſt of the Commiſſioners of Sewers, was ſent by the Lords of the Council to take a View of the Fens, and of their Outfalls to Sea, *Anno* 1618. We ſay, it was their Opinion, as well as that of the Commiſſioners of Sewers, and other knowing Men; that if thoſe Impediments had been remov'd, the *South* Level would have wanted little Imbanking to be made Winter Land, or good whole Year-ground.

This was the Opinion of the moſt knowing, above 100 Years ago; and had the Rivers been Imbanked, as the Act 1649. expreſsly ſays they ſhould: The Words are "*William* Earl of *Bedford*, &c. ſhall cauſe the ſame to be drained and "imbanked without Prejudice to Navigation," (and to do which, the Corporation of Undertakers had 95,000 Acres of Land ſet out to them and their Heirs for ever.) Had the Rivers been Imbanked, which the Adventurers own Engineer (Sir *Cornelius Vermuyden*) ſaid himſelf they ought to be —— His Words are: "There is in uſe a general Rule in Draining, and gaining of drowned "Lands; which is by Imbanking all the Rivers on each Side, and by leading "away the Downfall by Drains and Sluices."

The ſame ſaid *John Bavents Weſterdike*, another *Dutchman*, who was ſent for, and came over to view the Fens, *Anno* 1650. while *Vermuyden* was at Work. —— The ſame ſaid the Lord *Gorges*, Surveyor General of the Fens, and who underſtood them beſt of any of the Adventurers.

And had the Rivers been Imbanked, as the Commiſſioners of Sewers, and the moſt judicious and experienc'd Men adviſed, and the Act of Parliament directed, the Fens (which *Denver* Sluices and the Hundred-feet Drain have totally drowned) would have been at this time whole Year Land, and a Rich and Populous Country; and the Navigation of *Lyn*, *Cambridge*, &c. would have been at this Day in a very flouriſhing Condition.

This would have been the famous State of Navigation and Draining, if Nature had been aſſiſted by Imbankments, *&c.* and the Tide and Freſhes had not been ſtopped in their Paſſage, or forced out of their natural low Situation and deep Channel by Sluices.—Therefore when theſe artificial Works are deſerted, and the *Ouſe* hath its old natural Courſe given it, and the Rivers are Imbanked where neceſſary, Nature will ſoon reinſtate the Channels in their ancient Depth, (in the Manner before deſcrib'd) and after that is effected, the Spring-Tides and Land-Floods will (as heretofore) with their Weight and Action, grind and

wear

wear the River, Haven and Channel wider and deeper by degrees, to the great Improvement of Navigation and Draining to diſtant Ages, until they become abſolute and compleat for both.——— And it is my firm Opinion, that ſome few Ages hence the River *Ouſe*, &c. will be by the Tides and Freſhes made capable of the moſt extenſive Inland Navigation of any River in *England*; and that it will be by them made capacious enough to receive and convey to Sea all the Waters of the Great Level; and that the Fens will become as good Meadow and whole Year Ground, as are the Low-land, adjacent to the *Thames* or the *Humber*; if Col. *Armſtrong*'s Method be executed.

And as the Land through which the River *Ouſe* hath its Courſe, is the loweſt in the Level, and in the whole Country, by ſix Inches Deſcent *per* Mile, and is conſequently the Sink and natural Drain of the Fens, it is impoſſible to practiſe any Scheme that will be of Service to Navigation and Draining, but this propoſed for deepning the ſaid River and Outfall. Therefore it is equally the true Intereſt of the Corporation of Adventurers, and of the Inhabitants and Owners in the Fens, and Lands adjacent; and of the Corporations of *Lyn*, *Cambridge*, &c. and of all the Water Towns, to have this natural Method put in immediate Execution. And if this Method for deepning the River *Ouſe* be not executed, that River will continue choaking up more and more every ſucceeding Year; and in Conſequence thereof the ſaid River muſt in a ſhort time be render'd incapable of Navigation and Draining. Of this the Corporation of *Lyn* are ſo throughly convinc'd, that after they had receiv'd Colonel *Armſtrong*'s Report, they reſolv'd to uſe their utmoſt Efforts toward having the River and Harbour reſtored to their ancient Depth.

In order to this, a Deputation from *Lyn* waited on the Corporation of Adventurers at *Ely*, at their general Meeting in *Auguſt*, 1724. and repreſented to them their Caſe; and delivered an Affidavit of the Merchants, and Commanders of Ships, of the bad State of the Navigation, and gave them Colonel *Armſtrong*'s Propoſal for amending *Lyn* Harbour, and draining the Fens. The Corporation of Adventurers declared, that Navigation and Draining ought to go Hand in Hand, that they would come into Meaſures for bettering of both, and propos'd Meetings in *London* to conſider of Ways and Means.

The firſt publick Meeting was at the *Fen* Office the 5th of *November*, 1724.

Bedford Level: A Court held to conſider of Lyn Propoſals.

" The Corporation of Adventurers to uſe their own Words, " took into Con-
" ſideration the Scheme offered by the Corporation of *Lyn*, for the bettering
" their Harbour, by the Method thereby laid down: The Mayor of *Lyn*'s Let-
" ter, and the Remonſtrance of that Corporation, together with Colonel *Arm-*
" *ſtrong*'s Report, and the other Papers delivered to this Corporation at their
" meeting at *Ely*, in *Auguſt* laſt, were now read; and the Gentlemen on the
" Part of the Corporation of *Lyn*, now attending, were call'd in; and the ſe-
" veral Maps and Surveys by them produced, for the better Explanation of
" their Scheme, having been peruſed and examined by this Board, and the
" aforeſaid Parties heard thereto. ——— Mr. *Charles Bridgman*, who attended
" the Earl of *Lincoln* on his View of this Level, in *Auguſt* laſt, was called in,
" and preſented a Report and Scheme of his for the Relief of this Level in
" general, and of the Harbour of *Lyn*; which was read in the Preſence of Col.
" *Armſtrong*: And the Subject Matter of both thoſe Schemes having been de-
" bated by thoſe Gentlemen, this Court doth think fit to adjourn the further
" Conſideration till to Morrow-Morning, *&c.*

W. PLAXTOR, *Reg.*

Novem. 6. 1624.

A Committe appointed by the Adventurers to treat with Lyn.

" This Court entered upon the further Conſideration of the Schemes laid
" before them Yeſterday, touching the Relief of this Level, and the Harbour
" of *Lyn*; and the Gentlemen on the Part of *Lyn* Corporation now attending,
" were called in, and deſiring a Copy of Mr. *Bridgman*'s Scheme: It is ordered,
" that a Copy be made and delivered them accordingly. And it being now pro-
" pos'd to thoſe Gentlemen, that a Committee ſhould be appointed on either
" Side to conſider of the ſeveral Schemes already laid before this Board, or
" any other that ſhall be produced for the Relief of the preſent bad Condition

" of this Level, and of the Harbour of *Lyn*; and thoſe Gentlemen having no " Objection thereto, it is therefore

" Ordered, That the Members now preſent, and ſuch other of the Bailiffs and " Conſervatore as ſhall think fit to attend, or any Five or more of them be, and " they are hereby appointed a Committee to meet and treat with a Committee " on the Part of the Corporation of *Lyn*, on a Method for the aforeſaid Pur- " poſes, *&c.*

PRESENT.

BAILIFFS.

The Right Honourable the Earl of *Lincoln*.
Sir *Roger Jenyus*, Kt.
John Brownell, Eſq;
William Underwood, Eſq;
John Wright, Eſq;

CONSERVATORS.

The moſt noble *Scrope*, Duke of *Bridgwater*.
George Keat, Eſq;
James Fortrey, Eſq;
John Skrymſhire, Eſq;
William Cole Jun. Gent.
Nathaniel Green, Eſq;
Edward Bearcroft, Eſq;

W. PLAXTON, *Reg.*

King's-Lyn, Guild-Hall, } *Die Martis Decimo Die Novembr.* 1724.

A Committee named by Lyn. " Whereas upon Conference had between the Honourable Board of the Cor- " poration of the Adventurers of *Bedford* Level, and the Gentlemen lately ap- " pointed by this Body to attend them at the *Fen* Office in *London*, in the great " and weighty Affair of the reſtoring the Navigation of this Port, and draining " that Level; divers Schemes have been produced and offered, and laid be- " fore them for effecting thoſe Works. And it hath been propoſed by that Ho- " nourable Board, that a Committee ſhould be appointed on either Side, to con- " ſider thoſe Schemes, or any other Ways or Methods to be taken, that may be " adjudged moſt effectual for obtaining thoſe Ends. And a Committee is accord- " ingly appointed on their Parts, to be met at ſuch Times as this Corporation " ſhall think fit to appoint. It is therefore this Day ordered by the Mayor, " Aldermen, and Common-Council of this Burgh, in Council aſſembled, " That

The Right Honourable *Charles*, Lord Viſcount *Townſhend*, Baron and High Stewward of this Burgh.
The Right Honourable *R. Walpole*, Eſq; Sir *Charles Turner*, Knight, } our Members in Parliament.

John Turner, Eſq; Mayor.
Robert Britiffe, Eſq; Recorder.
Henry Hare, Eſq; Collector.
Sir *John Hobart*, Bart.
Waller Bacon, Eſq;
Martin Folks, Eſq;
John Spelman, Eſq; all of *Norfolk*.
John Turner, Eſq;
John Bagge, Gent.
Edmond Rolfe, Gent.
John Goodwyn, Gent.
Daniel Scarlet, Gent.
William Allen, Gent.
Jonas Rolfe, Gent. Town-Clerk, all of *Lyn*.

" Or any Five or more of them, together with any other Members of this Houſe " as ſhall think fit to attend, be and are hereby appointed a Committee, on be- " half of this Corporation, to meet and treat with the Committee appointed by " the ſaid Corporation of Adventurers, to conſider, debate, approve, agree and " conſent to ſuch Matters and Things, as in their Judgments ſhall appear moſt " proper for obtaining the deſirable Ends and Purpoſes aforeſaid: Which Com- " mittee are authorized and deſired to meet, and to continue ſuch Meetings and

" Conferences in this behalf, as may be requiſite and neceſſary, and as they " ſhall think fit.

JOHN GOODWYN.

While the Committees were preparing to meet, the Adventurers publiſhed the Papers, called Mr. *Bridgman*'s Scheme: To which the Managers for *Lyn* writ an Anſwer.

On the Third of *December* the Committees met at ſix in the Evening, at the Earl of *Lincoln*'s Houſe. The Occaſion of their Meeting was opened, and the Town-Clerk of *Lyn* read Colonel *Armſtrong*'s Report and Propoſals, for draining the Fens, and amending *Lyn* Harbour. And then the Regiſter of the Adventurers read the Scheme they had printed. After which the Managers for *Lyn* deſired that their Anſwer to that Scheme might be read; but it growing late in the Night, after ſome Debates and Reaſonings on both Sides, the Merits of the Cauſe was waved, and the Committees were adjourned. *The Committees meet.*

They met not again till after *Chriſtmas*; in the mean Time the Managers for *Lyn* printed an Anſwer Paragraph by Paragraph, to the Scheme read by the Adventurers: The Amount of that Scheme, as they ſumm'd them up themſelves, *p.* 11. is,

" *Firſt*, That the free Admiſſion of the Tides up the River *Ouſe*, above the " Port of *Lyn*, has been, and if continued, will complete the Ruin of that " Harbour, and of the River *Ouſe*; and of ſuch Part of the Fens that ſhould " drain through that River, *&c.*

" *Secondly*, That the old Courſe of theſe Rivers were utterly improper, had " it been poſſible to have imbanked them, for the purpoſe of conveying " theſe prodigious Land-floods to Sea, which paſs through the ſaid Fen " Country.

" *Thirdly*, That the great imbank'd Receptacles were judiciouſly made and diſ- " pos'd, conſidering their great Diſtance from their Outfalls; and that they were " the only means poſſible of conveying theſe great Land-waters to Sea, and con- " ſequently of preſerving the Fens as far as could be thought abſolutely neceſ- " ſary in thoſe times.

" The Method to reinſtate *Lyn* Harbour and drain the Fens in general, is " this, ——— *Not to admit the Tides to flow any higher up the River* Ouſe, *than* " *into* Lyn *Harbour*".

I ſhall not make any Obſervation upon this Scheme here, a printed Anſwer to it may be had at *Lyn* and *Cambridge*: but proceed. When the Committees met again, after ſome Debate had, the Adventurers gave that Scheme up, and offered no other: Upon which the Committee for *Lyn* deſired to know what they could object againſt the Propoſal made by Col. *Armſtrong*. No Objections of any weight being made, it was reſolved by both Committees, that the only Method to drain the Fens, and to amend *Lyn* Harbour, is to reſtore the Rivers to their ancient Freedom, and to give them the ſame Courſe they had the 6th Year of K. *Charles* I. as is directed by the Act, 15 *Car.* 2.

This being agreed on, the Managers of each Corporation were ordered to conſider of, and to draw up a Plan for raiſing Money, and the Manner of carrying on the Works; about which many Difficulties were ſtarted, which occaſioned great Delay: And the Members of Parliament of ſeveral Corporations intereſted herein, deſiring time to conſult their Principals in a Matter of this Importance, all farther Proceedings were ſtayed, that ſo all Parties may have Time to inform themſelves, and to underſtand their true Intereſt.

Though the Navigation to ſome Towns by the old Courſe is farther about than by the Hundred-foot Drain, yet when it is conſidered, that that River is no crookeder than the *Thames*, or any other natural River. —— That the Tides flow many Miles farther into this crooked River, than into the ſtrait Hundred-foot, which is a great Help to Navigation. ——— That by means of its low Situation there will always be a greater Depth of Water in it, than there is, or ever

ever was in the Hundred-foot. —— That the Navigation will be conſtant in the Summer time, which it is not now. —— That Navigation can be carried on with Neip, as well as Spring-Tides, and be very regular; whereas now it can be performed with Spring-Tides only, whereby much Time and Charges are loſt. And it being alſo farther conſidered, that the Navigation between *Cambridge* and *St. Ives*, *Huntington*, *Bedford* will be free and open; it is moſt certainly the true Intereſt of all the trading Towns to come into the Meaſures propoſed: I ſay, for theſe Reaſons (among others) it is their Intereſt. But when it is ſeriouſly conſidered, that unleſs the Method propoſed be executed, their Navigation to *Lyn* will in a few Years be loſt; there is an abſolute neceſſity for it, for their own Preſervation, and for the good of their Poſterity.

The River *Ouſe* is already ſo choaked up, that it is incapable of draining the Fens, and Lands adjacent to it; and it is prov'd, there is no other way to drain them, but that of deepning the River *Ouſe*; therefore it is the true Intereſt of the Corporation of Adventures, and of the Land-Owners of theſe Parts, to have this Method put in Practice.

A vaſt Tract of Country is rendered unprofitable by being overflow'd, and the Navigation is in the moſt imminent Danger of being wholly loſt, if this Method be not executed; and in Conſequence thereof, the Duties and Cuſtoms of the State muſt greatly diminiſh: It is therefore the Intereſt of the Government, to have the River *Ouſe* and *Lyn* Harbour reſtored to their ancient Goodneſs. Which this natural Method will not only do effectually, but will improve them, and render them abſolute and compleat for Navigation and Draining.

F I N I S.

THE

THE APPENDIX.

The REPORT *of Col.* ARMSTRONG, *chief Engineer of* England; *made to the Right Honourable* Henry *Earl of* Lincoln, *Surveyor-General of* Bedford *Level, and to the Right Honourable* Robert Walpole, *Esq; Burgess in Parliament for* King's-Lyn; *of the State of the Fens, and the Port of* Lyn: *With Proposals for Draining the said Fens, and Amending the Harbour of* Lyn, 1724.

SIR,

THE Harbour of *Lyn* being almost choaked up with Sand, and in great Danger of being totally lost, I have according to your Desire viewed the same, in order to find out the true Cause of such visible Decay of so useful and beneficial a Harbour in that Part of the Kingdom.

And being then at the Request of the Right Honourable the Earl of *Lincoln*, &c. viewing the Fens in those Parts, to find out the true Cause of the Difficulty in draining a great Part of those Fens, very much incommoded with Water, I did apply my self very attentively to discover that Cause also.

In my Perambulation to these Purposes with several Gentlemen of that Country, I have discovered the true Cause of both these great Evils, *viz.* That for a considerable Time past, there hath not been a sufficient Indraught for the Tides to flow up to the *Ouse*, as they formerly did, for many Miles together, into that River and the other Rivers that fall into it below *Ely*. By means of which, upon their Reflux, it being always half Ebb at *Lyn* before it had done flowing at *Salters-lode*, these Tides constantly returning by a narrow Channel, continually scour'd out the Sands in the said River, and preserved a Channel, I am sufficiently informed, ten Feet deeper than it is at this Time.

Then as to the Land-Floods or Freshes that come down in the Winter, which greatly help'd formerly towards the Preservation of the ancient Depth of Water in the River *Ouse*, they being now turn'd out of the said River, their natural Channel, down the new *Bedford* River, or Hundred-foot Cut, has, as largely as the above-mentioned Want of an Indraught, contributed to the Spoiling of the said River; by the aukward and unnatural Course those Waters constantly take upwards to *Ely*, and into the *South* Level, instead of running out to Sea; and thereby carrying with them such a prodigious Quantity of Silt and Sand, that the said River is now become much Shallower upwards between *Denver* and *Ely* than it formerly was. Insomuch, that if these two Evils are not speedily remedied, the draining of the great Tract of Land, the within-Land Navigation of the Country, as well as the Port or Harbour of *Lyn* will be entirely lost.

Having thus pointed out the two great Causes so destructive to Draining and Navigation; and further, as it is very evident to any impartial Enquirer, that Draining and Navigation have so close a Connexion the one with the other, that the one cannot subsist without the other:

I come now to propoſe a Method whereby both theſe Evils may be effectually cured, *viz.* All the Fens in general drained, the within-Land Navigation, and the Harbour of *Lyn* preſerved and amended.

Finding the River *Ouſe* to be, as ordained by Nature, the great Drain of all that Part of the Country; I did, the better to ſatisfy the Corporation of *Lyn*, as well as the Corporation of Adventurers, whoſe true Intereſts are inſeparable, eſpecially as to the Draining and Navigation, direct an exact Survey to be made of the ſaid River, from *Erith* to *Lyn*, including thar Harbour, and a great Tract downwards to Sea.

Beſides this, I directed that ſeveral Maps and very accurate Surveys of the ancient and preſent State of the Fens ſhould be fairly copied; and alſo that as exact an Account as could be collected from authentick Records, as well as from Obſervations lately made upon the Spot, ſhould be drawn up, of the ancient and preſent State of the Navigation, and draining of the Fens by the ſaid River. And further I directed the Motions of the Tides to be obſerved for a conſiderable Time together; as alſo the Motions of the Land-Floods or Freſhes: And having theſe Materials by me, they ſerve to confirm my Judgment, as I hope they will that of all Perſons concern'd, that there is no other Means can be ſo effectually uſed to regain the ancient Depth of the *Ouſe*, and thereby recover the Navigation thereupon, as well as that of the Harbour of *Lyn*, and effectually drain the *Bedford* Levels, which are ſo much in Danger of being totally loſt, as this which follows, *viz.*

I. To open the old *Ouſe* from *Harrimere* to *Hermitage* near *Erith* to its ancient Breadth and Depth, and with the Earth that comes out of it, form Banks on the Sides thereof, to prevent the Land-Floods or Freſhes overflowing the adjacent Land in the Winter.

II. To remove the Gravels near *Stretham*, or where-ever elſe they are to be found in the River *Ouſe*; as alſo all other Impediments: To the End the Land-Floods, whenever they deſcend, may find a quick Paſſage to Sea, and carry off all the Silt and Sand they meet in their Way.

III. To take up the Remains of *Denver* Sluices, or make a new Cut juſt by them, to render the River (now but Eighty Foot wide,) in this Place 150 Foot wide, as it formerly was; ſo that the Tides may have full Liberty to flow up by the *Ouſe*, into their ancient Receptacles, *viz.* the Rivers *Stoke*, *Brandon*, *Mildenhall* and *Grant*, which will contain a ſufficient Indraught of back Water for deepning the *Ouſe* upon its Return, and thereby reſtoring its Navigation within-Land, as well as giving the Land-Floods, when they deſcend, a ſwifter Paſſage to diſcharge themſelves by the Port of *Lyn* into the Sea.

And that this may be the more effectual, it will be neceſſary,

IV. To make the River *Ouſe* as wide as it was ever known to be at each of the Bridges now ſubſiſting at *Downham*, *Stow*, *Magdalen*, and *Germans*, by taking away the Bruſhwood, *&c.* put down to narrow it at theſe Places.

V. To take up the Sluice or Saſs now at the *Hermitagē* upon the River *Ouſe* near *Erith*. And if it ſhould be thought neceſſary, to ſet it again in the New *Bedford* River, or 100 Foot Cut near the *Hermitage*, for the Benefit of Navigation, and thereby to ſend the Land-Floods down the River *Ouſe*, their natural Channel: which muſt as afore-mentioned have a good Effect, and prevent their deſcending for the future by the new *Bedford* River, and running unnaturally as they for ſome Years paſt have been obſerved to do for many Days together, to the great Damage of the River *Ouſe*, and if not timely remedied, will be the total Deſtruction of Navigation upon that River, and the other Rivers upwards towards *Cambridge*. as already that of Draining.

By this Method I am humbly of Opinion, that the Land-Floods or Freſhes being turn'd into the River *Ouſe*, their natural Channel, join'd to the Reflux of the

the Tide, which will now have a much larger Indraught for a back Water, than it has had for many Years before, will infallibly deepen the *Ouſe* in a very little Time to its ancient Depth, by driving out to Sea the Sand and Silt, by which it is now very near choak'd up, and thereby not only render all the Fens capable of being drain'd effectually, but all the Rivers that fall into it, will be by being deepned, made capable of carrying as large Barges or Boats as ever they did heretofore.

And it will deepen and clear out the Haven of *Lyn*, and their Channel from thence down to Sea.

May. 12. 1724. JOHN ARMSTRONG.

The REPORT *of Sir* Clement Edmonds, *Knight, made to the Lords of his Majeſty's Privy Council, of the State of the Fens, upon a general View taken in* Auguſt, 1618.

N. B. *The firſt Part of this Report you'll find,* Sect. 4. p. 29, 30. *ending at the Sixteenth Line. Then it goes on thus.*

THE Second Difficulty is, that as the Outfall of the River *Ouſe* was ample and great, and gave large Paſſage to the freſh Waters, deſcending from the Inland Countries: So on the other Side the Sea cometh in with ſuch a Tide, eſpecially if a Northerly Wind meet with a Land-Flood, that divers Towns in Marſhland are in danger to be overflow'd and ſurrounded; and therefore by their Petition, deſired the Haven might be ſtraitned in ſome Place near about *Lyn* to keep out the Sea; alledging, that the ſaid Haven had in the Memory of Man been narrower and ſhallower then now it is, being of late grown to that Breadth and Depth, by the great Fall of the freſh Waters that have left their ancient Channels, to follow that Stream: And the Mayor and Town of *Lyn* being made acquainted with their Petition, ſeem'd to ſtand indifferent: But in reſpect of the great Conſequence, the Committees forbear to give any Opinion therein, but left it to ſuch further Conſideration as is requiſite.

From the River of *Ouſe* the Committee went to *Wisbech*, to view the Outfall of the River *Nene*, and to inform themſelves of the State of thoſe Parts.

The River of *Nene* cometh from *Northampton* by *Higham Ferrers*, to *Peterborow*, and not far from thence divideth itſelf into divers Branches; part running toward *Crowland*, by the Name of the Old *Eea*, and *Catt-water*, where it falleth into the River of *Welland*, and is now ſo ſtopp'd up, that it affordeth no paſſage by Boat; and part by *Horſey* Bridge and *Ramſey* Meer, and ſo is divided again by *Plant-water*, which runneth toward *Wisbech*; and by the Stream which falleth by *March* into *Well-water*, and from thence by *Salters-lode* into the *Ouſe*, and ſo falleth into the Sea at *Lyn*; and part thereof is likewiſe conveyed by a Cut, called the new *Leame*, beginning a Mile below *Peterborow* directly to *Guyhirne*, where it meeteth with *Wisbech* River.

The ſaid River is divided likewiſe below *Pererborrow*, near unto *Horſey* Bridge, by a Stream called *Whittleſey Dike*, which is ſevered through the Fens by divers Branches; part falling toward *Wisbech*, and part by *Salters-lode* into the *Ouſe*.

But the whole Country doth acknowledge without Queſtion or Contradiction, that the ancient Outfall of the River of *Nene* is *Wisbech* River. And upon the View of the Committees, the ſaid River was found much defective in diverſe Places, as well in breadth as depth; and eſpecially below *Wisbech* near the Outfall, it wanteth much depth, and is grown up and choaked with Silt: And not only below *Wisbech*, but above alſo, inſomuch that the Bottom is ſix Foot or more higher than it was before, which they proved; for that in

Wisbeeh *River.*

in former Times the Inland Water at *Guyhirn* ran into that River at five Foot Fall; whereas on the contrary, the ſaid River falleth back into the Inland Water at *Guyhirn*. And it appeared plainly upon View, that the Bottom of the River for a Mile or more below *Guyhirn*, was far higher than the Level on the Side, and conſequently could not ſerve for a Drain thereto.

And this is the Condition of that River, as now it appeared upon View. For Amendment whereof, the Commiſſioners have made a Law of Sewers for the cleanſing and dikeing of the ſame, agreeable in ſome ſort to the Inſtance of the Town of *Wisbech*; to the End, the Inland Drains may fall into their ancient and natural Channel, as the readieſt Means for their Conveyance to the Sea.

Sluice at the Horſhoe.

And for as much as the ſaid Town and Inhabitants adjoining did conceive, that the erecting of a Sluice at a Place below *Wisbech*, called the *Horſhoe*, would be very needful for the preſerving of the River from being choaked with Silt; they deſired that a Law might be made for the erecting ſuch a Sluice now, upon the dikeing and cleanſing that River: But the Court of Sewers were of Opinion, that if the River was made and accommodated to a convenient Outfall, the freſh Waters deſcending would ſtill grind the Channel to ſuch a Depth, as ſhould not need any ſuch Sluice; and alledging withal, that there being a Sluice heretofore erected at the great Charge of the Country upon that River of *Wisbech*, not far from the Place where now they deſired to have one made, it ſtood not ſeven Days, but was broken and blown up by the Tides. Nevertheleſs, it was agreed that after the ſaid River was diked to ſuch a ſufficient Depth, there ſhould be a Sluice erected if need required. But notwithſtanding this Law of Sewers for Amendment of that River, it is like to ſort to ſmall effect, becauſe they cannot agree where to lay the Charge: The Town of *Wisbech* alledging, That the Benefit of cleanſing and dikeing that Outfall, will altogether accrue to the behoof of the Upland Country, and ſerve for their Eaſe and Safety, by disburthening them of the Overcharge of their Waters; and therefore that they ought to put their Hand to work, and contribute thereto in ſome reaſonable meaſure: And on the other Side, the Upland Countries do produce divers Preſentments, and ſome as high as *H. 6.* ſhewing that they ought not to be charged therewith; though otherwiſe they do not deny, that when the Channel is ſcoured, if it prove ſerviceable, they will yield a reaſonable and indifferent Aid: But thoſe of *Wisbech* require Contribution at the firſt, to be expended as the Work ſhall proceed. And this is like to be the Hindrance of the Dikeing and accommodating of that Outfall.

From the Defect of this Outfall, as likewiſe from that of the River of *Welland*, which is worſe than this, it falleth out, that the River of *Nene*, which from *Peterborrow* down to *Stanground* and lower, (where it is divided into Branches) is now in Summer 200 Foot broad, and 16 or 20 Foot deep, hath no way (beſides thoſe Branches that find a Paſſage as aforeſaid) for the Diſcharge of ſo great a Weight of Waters, but the Level below *Peterborrow*, which is a large Tract of a Country: A great Part whereof, and eſpecially that about *Thorny* Abby and of *Crowland*, was in former Times (as the Country informeth) firm and good Ground; and is now a mere *Lerna*, ſurrounded with Water, and ſerving only for Fiſh and Fowl, without any further Benefit to the Publick. The reſt of the Level is near of the ſame Condition, and go all under the Name of the High Fens.

Which Stop and Overcharge of Water there, doth not only cauſe the like overflowing in the Upland Country to their infinite Loſs and Diſadvantage, upon Occaſions of Floods and Swellings of Waters, but the Inlanders themſelves are in like Danger, as well for thoſe Parts whereof they make uſe, as for their Cattle and their own Safety: Out of fear whereof they oftentimes upon the Swelling of the Waters, ring the Bells backwards, as they do in other Places when the Town is in Danger of Fire.

And thereupon it is that the Upland Men, (as they inform) having long time expected an Amendment of the Outfall of *Wisbech*, and finding little hope of a Remedy that way, did agree upon a Drain in the 38th Year of the late Queen, by way of a Supply to *Wisbech* River, called *Clowes-Croſs*; or *Shire Drain*, and divideth the Iſle of *Ely* from *Holland*, and by *Shire-Gote* falleth into that River, ſome five Miles below that Town: which Sewer lying 10 or 12 Foot lower than the Level above, and where the Drain of the *South Eea* run-

neth,

neth, moſt of the Commiſſioners now in their View, found to be the beſt Drain to regain the ſurrounded Grounds all above *South Eea* Bank, aud to preſerve the *North* Side of *Wisbech*; and that it needed only ſome raiſing and ſtrengthning of the Banks, and bottoming in ſome Places. Nevertheleſs, the ſaid Commiſſioners provided that this Drain of *Clows-Croſs* do run but only at Times, when the Water is all above the Soil, and as a Supplement to the River of *Wisbech*; but at other times, the Water to follow *Wisbech* River, rather becauſe there is no probability that both can ſtand together. But if *Wisbech* River be not perfected and made ſufficient for Conveyance of the Waters, that anciently followed that Channel, then the Drain of *Clows-Croſs* muſt be the Benefit and Eaſe of the Upland Countries; and to this Drain the Country ſtandeth generally much affected, as well thoſe that dwell in the Upland Parts, as thoſe that dwell below in Marſhland.

And whereas the River of *Wisbech* runneth from the four *Gotes* below *Wisbech*, down along by the Sea to the Skirt of *Marſhland*, the Inhabitants there complain of much Prejudice and further Danger, which they fear by that Channel as now it is: But if the Outfall ſhould be opened, and carry all ſuch Waters as ought to follow that Stream, they were never able to endure it. For Remedy whereof, it is conceived and agreed upon by the ſaid Committees, That if the ſaid River, together with the Drain of *Clows-Croſs*, be carried from the four *Gotes* by a new Cut, to be made through the Salt-marſhes to an Outfall, called *King's Creek*, beſides the Benefit which will ariſe by the draining of their Fens, it will ſecure Marſhland from Danger, and no way prejudice *Holland*.

Welland. The River of *Welland* running by *Stamford*, *Deeping* and *Spalding* to the Sea, was likewiſe viewed by the Commiſſioners, and found to be a very fair, open, and clean River down as low as *Crowland*, but from thence to *Spalding* very defective, for want of dikeing and cleanſing; and from *Spalding* to the meeting of this Water with the River of *Glen*, near unto the Sea, almoſt ſilted up for want of Dikeing, and a Current of freſh Water to ſcour the Channel; inſomuch as they were forced below *Spalding*, at the time of this View, and in Sight of all the Company, to carry their Boats by Cart the Space of three or four Miles, to a Place called *Foſs-dike* (where great Ships lay at Anchor) for want of a Current at a Low-water to carry them down the Channel. And the Inhabitants of *Spalding* did complain, that they had no Water in the River to ſerve the neceſſary Uſes of the Town, but ſuch as was unwholeſome, by reaſon of the Shallowneſs thereof; which was leſs than half a Foot deep, two Miles below the Town, where the Committees now in the View rid over.

And this is the State of thoſe Countries, as appeared upon this View, whereby your Lordſhips may perceive in what Diſtreſs and Extremity they are, for want of Outfalls to the Sea, in the Rivers of *Nene* and *Welland*; which two Rivers, according to the Information of the Country, do feed twelve Drains falling through the Fens, beſides other Dikes, all which did in former times fall into *Wisbech* Deep; but ſix of them are now turned from thence, *viz.* Three on the *North* Side above *Wisbech*, dividing the Counties of *Cambridge* and *Lincoln*; and Three on the *South* Side below *Wisbech*, dividing the Counties of *Cambridge* and *Norfolk*; the other ſix are ſtill left to fall into *Wisbech* River, if it would receive them: But it carrieth not ſo much Water as one of them can bring to it; for when the Water cometh to *Guyhirn*, it forſaketh *Wisbech* River, and turneth towards *March*, and all for want of a ſufficient Outfall.

Neither is it altogether new or grown of late (though otherwiſe far more than ever, in regard the Outfalls are more choaked than formerly) that theſe Countries are ſurrounded and overcharged with Waters, but that former times ſtood in need of Help and Aſſiſtance in this behalf. For in the Time of *H. 6.* *Gilbert Haltoft*, one of the Barons of the *Exchequer*, and dwelling about *Well* in the Iſle of *Ely*, procured a Commiſſion for the Draining and ſettling of that Country; and accordingly proceeded in making Laws, which are now often alledged by the Name of *Haltoft*'s Commiſſion. Haltoft's Commiſſion.

New Leam. And afterwards, in the Time of *H. 7.* Biſhop *Morton*, Lord Chancellor of *England*, made a fair Drain for the Eaſe of the River of *Nene*, from *Stanground* a little below *Peterborow*, 14 Miles in length, and carried the ſame dow to *Guyhirn*, where it meeteth with *Wisbech* River; near to which Place he built a Tower of Brick, (part whereof is yet ſtanding) to the End he might

ſee his Workmen afar off in the Level, and give ſuch Directions as was requiſite: Which Drain was known by the Name of the *New Leam*.

Popham-Lode. And of later Times my Lord *Popham* much affecting the Good of this Country, among other his Induſtries, made a fair Drain called *Popham's Eau*, beginning about *Well*, and falling into the Podike, which is now ſtopped from running, in regard of Prejudice to ſome particular Men.

And ſome of *London* have likewiſe of late taken Grounds there, and either made or cleanſed a fair Drain, called *London Lode*, near unto the ſaid Place.

And if your Lordſhips pleaſe to take it into your honourable Care, and direct ſome real and effectual Courſe for the opening of theſe two Outfalls, and the regaining ſo many Thouſand Acres that are now ſurrounded, which will prove a Work of great Honour to his Majeſty, and Good to the Publick; though there be many Gentlemen of good Worth in thoſe Parts, that want neither Judgment nor Zeal to do ſervice therein: Yet it is conceived, that it would be beſt affected by ſuch as have no Intereſt at all in the Country, but ſtanding indifferent betwixt each Party, and having no other End but the common Benefit, may proceed according to the Rule of Juſtice and Reaſon; as well in draining the Waters to their true and ancient Outfalls, which is the only means to do the Country good, as levying Charge without Favour or Partiality: Wherein tho' they are like to find many Gainſayers, according to a Maxim they have among themſelves, That he that will do any good in Sewing, muſt do it againſt the Will of ſuch as ſhall have profit by it: Yet the End will crown the Work with Honour and Safety, and make large Room for People and Habitation, with as much Advantage to the State, as any other part of the Kingdom can afford. All which I humbly leave to your Lordſhips grave and approved Wiſdoms.

Sept. 20th, 1618. CLEMENT EDMONDS.

The Bounds of the Great Level of the Fens, called Bedford Level, *as limited by the Act* 1649. *and confirmed by the Act*, 15 Car. 2.

THE ſaid Level is bounded as followeth, *viz. Eaſtward* from the Bridge and Cauſeway of *Stoke*, unto *Brandon* Bridge, upon the Uplands of *Northold*, *Methold*, *Feltwell*, *Hockwold* and *Wilton*, in the County of *Norfolk*; (ſee the Map of the great Level of the Fens) and from *Brandon* Bridge unto the end of *Worlington-lode*, upon *Mildenhall* River, upon the Uplands of *Brandon*, the Low-grounds of *Waynsford* excluding the ſame; the Uplands of *Lakenheath*, the Low-grounds of *Earſwell* excluding the ſame; and the Uplands of *Mildenhall* in the County of *Suffolk*. —— *Southward* from *Worlington-lode* unto *Burwell* Block, upon the Uplands of *Freckingham*, *Iſlham*, *Fordham*, *Soham*, and *Wickin*, in the County of *Cambridge*, and excluding the Low-grounds of *Burwell*, *Landward*, and other Places lying *Eaſtward* from *Burwell* Block aforeſaid; and from thence unto the Mill near *Angliſey* Abby, upon the Uplands of *Burwell*, *Reach*, *Swaffham Prior*, *Swaffham Bulbeck*, and *Botſham*, in the County of *Cambridge*; and from thence unto the Ferry place at *Clayhith*, upon the Uplands, called *Quihall*, the Low-grounds called *Low-Fen*, and the Uplands of *Horming ſey* and *Clayhith* in the ſaid County, excluding the Low-grounds called *Low-Fen* and *Offen*; and from the ſaid Ferry Place unto *Over-lode*, upon the Uplands of *Waterbeach*, *Cottenham*, *Rampton*, *Wivelingham*, and *Over*, into the ſaid County of *Cambridge*; and upon the Low-grounds of *Swacy* in the ſaid County, excluding the ſame.— *Weſtward* from *Erith*, unto the Dam lately made upon the River *Nean* near *Standground*, upon the Uplands of *Somerſham* and the *Soak* thereof, *Warboys*, *Wiſtow*, *Berry*, *Ramſey*, *Upwood*, *Ravely*, *Woodwalton*, *Swatrey*, *Connington*, *Glatton* and *Holm*, *Caldecot*, *Denton*, *Stilton*, *Yaxley*, *Faſſet* and *Standground*, in the County of *Huntington*, excluding the Low-grounds lying on the *North* Side of the River *Ouſe* above *Erith*; and from the ſaid Dam unto *Peterborough* Bridge, upon the ſaid River of *Nean*; and from thence unto the Ferry Place near *Waldron* Hall, upon the Uplands of *Peterborough*, and the *Soak* thereof

thereof in the County of *Northampton*,—*Northward* from the ſaid Ferry Place near *Waldron* Hall, unto *Crowland* Bridge upon the River of *Welland*; and from thence to *Dowſdale*, upon the Banks of Great *Porſand*; and from thence unto *Guybirn*, upon the *South Eea* Bank; and from thence unto *Tilneybirn*, upon the Bank of the Fen-ground called *Walderſey*; and from thence unto *Elme Leam* at *Granger*'s Houſe, upon the Bank of the Fen-ground called *Coldham*; and from thence unto the River of *Nean*, near *Thurling*'s in *Upwell*, upon the Bank of *Needham*, called *Biſhop's Dike*; and from thence unto *Well-Creek* at the *North-weſt* Corner of *Walſingham* Fen, upon the Bank of the Grounds in *Upwell* and *Outwell*, called *Play-field* and *Church-field*, excluding the aforeſaid Fens and Grounds called *Walderſey*, *Coldham*, *Needham*, *Play-field* and *Church-field*; and from thence unto *Salters-lode*, upon the new Podike Bank; and from thence unto the Mouth of the River *Wiſſey*, upon the River *Ouſe*; and from thence unto *Helgay* Bridge, upon the River *Wiſſey*; and from thence unto the Upland, at the End of the Bank of the Grounds late of *Edmond Skipwith*, Eſq; deceaſed upon the ſaid Bank; and from thence unto *Stoke* Bridge, upon the Uplands of *Roxham*, *Deerham*, *Weerham*, *Wretton* and *Stoke*, in the ſaid County of *Norfolk*; except the imbanked Grounds late of *Edmond Skipwith*, Eſq; lying on the *North* Side of the River *Ouſe*.

An ABSTRACT *of the Act for Draining the Great Level of the Fens, which paſſed the* 29th *of* May, 1649.

The Act ſets forth.

THAT for the Improvement of the Fens, which would cauſe an Increaſe of our Manufactures, Commerce and Trade, and be an Advantage to the Commonwealth, the Great Level, whoſe Limits and Bounds are deſcribed, was undertaken to be drained by *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, and Participants, who in his Life time made good Progreſs in ths ſaid Work; but by reaſon of ſome late Interruptions, their Work have fallen into Decay. —— Therefore now *William*, Son of the ſaid *Francis*, undertakes to proceed effectually in the ſaid Work of Draining. That the ſame may proceed with Juſtice and Effect, it is enacted,

That the ſaid *William* Earl of *Bedford*, and Participants, ſhall, on or before the 10th Day of *October*, 1656. cauſe the ſame to be *drained and imbanked without Prejudice to Navigation, in the ſaid Rivers or Parts adjacent; and all the ſaid Level*, except as hereafter is excepted, *ſhall be made Winter Grounds, in ſuch manner as the ſaid Rivers or any of them ſhall not overflow the Grounds within the ſaid Level*.

And for bearing the Charge of draining and maintaining the Works from time to time, ſhall have and enjoy 95,000 Acres, and collect Taxes out of the ſaid 95,000 Acres for that Purpoſe: Each Adventurer to pay 50 Shillings an Acre towards the doing the ſaid Work of Draining. Have Power to make any new, or enlarge any old Cuts, or other Works neceſſary for the ſaid Draining; giving reaſonable Satisfaction to the Owners, where ſuch Cuts or Works are made. If any difference happen therein, then all ſhall be ordered and adjudged by the Commiſſioners hereafter named, or by any ſix or more of them.

No Commiſſioners of Sewers to intermeddle, but to uphold and maintain the Works after adjudged; the ſaid Earl and Adventurers having 200 Acres, or any five or more of them to act as Commiſſioners of Sewers, and have Power to make Taxes upon the 95,000 Acres, only for upholding the Works of Draining. To this end, have Power to meet in the *Middle Temple* Hall, *London*, upon the 17th Day after every Term.

The Commiſſioners hereafter named, have Power three Years after the Draining is adjudged, to give and make Satisfaction out of the 95,000 Acres, to ſuch whoſe Lands or Intereſt ſhall be made worſe by the Draining, than they were in the 6th Year of King *Charles* I.

To prevent Differences between the Adventurers, the Names and particular Shares of each Adventurer to be entred in a Book for that purpoſe provided, and no Conveyance to be valid till ſo entered or inrolled in the *Chancery*.

And it is enacted, That the Commiſſioners hereafter named, or any ſix or more of them, ſhall inform themſelves by Examination of Witneſſes upon Oath, and by their own View, or both, of all ſuch Matters which ſhall be neceſſary for the ſpeedy executing all the Powers given them, and doing Juſtice therein.

And the Sheriffs and all other Officers of the Counties in which the Premiſes lie, are required to be aiding and aſſiſting.

And it is enacted, That

William Lenthal, Eſq; Speaker of the Parliament.

The Lord Keeper.

Lord Chamberlain, or

Lord Commiſſioner or Commiſſioners of the Great Seal of *England* for the Time being.

All the Judges of the Upper Bench, and Common Pleas, and

Barons of the *Exchequer* for the Time being.

Philip, Earl of *Pembroke* and *Montgomery*.

William, Earl of *Salisbury*.

Edward, Lord *Howard*, Baron of *Eſerick*.

Oliver Cromwel, Lieutenant General.

Henry Ireton, Commiſſary General.

Sir *John Danvers*: And 45 more Knights and Eſquires therein mentioned.

And every of them are hereby appointed Commiſſioners, to hear and determine all Matters preſcrib'd in this Act.

An Abstract *of the Act of Parliament, made* Anno 15. Caroli II. Regis. *For ſettling the Draining of the Great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford Level.

The Act ſets forth.

THAT after ſeveral fruitleſs Attempts, the Fens were at laſt at the Requeſt of the Perſons intereſſed, undertaken to be drained by *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, according to a Law of Sewers made at *King's Lyn*, *Anno*. 6. *Car*. 1. who was to have for his Recompence 95,000 Acres.

§. 2. The Bounds and Extent of the Fens deſcrib'd.

Great Encouragement given by King *Charles* I. to the ſaid Earl, his Adventurers and Participants, upon the Covenants and Conditions contain'd in a certain Indenture of 14 Parts, bearing date the 27th of *Feb*. 7th Year of his ſaid Majeſty's Reign.

§. 3. And by Letters Patents, his Adventurers to have Succeſſiion for ever.

After the ſaid Earl *Francis* his Death, *William* Earl of *Bedford*, his Son and Heir, obtained a pretended Act of Parliament, 29°. *Maii* 1649. and by colour of that Act, he and his Participants proceeded in finiſhing the Works, and the Fens were adjudged drained by the Commiſſioners appointed by that Act. But as they could not be preſerved without a perpetual conſtant Care, and orderly Government:

§. 4. Therefore incorporated by the Name of the Governor, Bayliffs, and Commonalty of the Company of Conſervators of the Great Level of the Fens, to conſiſt of a Governor, ſix Bayliffs, 20 Conſervators and Commonalty.

§. 5. And any five or more of them, whereof the Governor, or Bayliffs, or any of them to be Two, to Tax the 95,000 Acres, to maintain the Works. Penalty of Non-payment, not exceeding one Third Part of the Tax.

§. 6, 7. The 12000 Acres accepted of by the late King *Charles* I. to be ſubject to all Taxes, with the Reſidue of the 95,000 Acres.

§. 8. The Governor, Bayliffs and Conſervators, appointed Commiſſioners of Sewers for Preſervation of the Level, by convenient Outfalls to Sea; and they or any five, whereof the Governor or any of the Bayliffs to be two, to act as Com-

Commiſſioners of Sewers within the ſaid great Level; and of the Works made, or to be made without the ſaid Level, for conveying the Waters by convenient Outfalls to the Sea.

§. 9. No other Commiſſioners to meddle.

§. 10. Conveyance of Freehold, and Inheritance of the 95,000 Acres of Force, if enter'd with the Regiſter, in a Book kept for that Purpoſe from the Time of Entry.

§. 11. Non-payment of Taxes to be levied by Sale of the Lands, the *Thurſday* and *Friday* after the firſt *Sunday* in *April*.

§. 12. Have Power to erect new Works within or without the ſaid Level, for conveying the Waters to Sea; making Satisfaction where they Cut. And if any Perſon ſhall cut, throw down, or deſtroy any ſuch Works, ſhall anſwer treble Damages and Coſts, by Action of Treſpaſs.——And if malicious, ſhall be puniſhed as for cutting the Podike in Marſhland.

§. 13. The Governor and the other Officers to take an Oath, well and truly to execute that Office in all Things: The Oath to be adminiſtred by any two of the Corporation. And for the Continuance of the ſaid Corporation for ever, the Members upon *Wedneſday* in *Whitſun*-Week yearly, ſhall chuſe new Officers, by the greater Number than preſent (whereof the Governor or one of the Bailiffs to be one;) a Governor or Bailiffs to have 400 Acres of the ſaid 95,000, elſe not qualified.

A Conſervator 200 Acres.

The Commonalty, Electors, to have 100 Acres, to enable him to Vote.

§. 20. And whereas the *Draining aforeſaid, and future Maintenance of the ſaid Great Level, ought to be without Prejudice to Navigation*; and becauſe all Complaints which have been made, and all Prejudices which have been, or ſhall be done to particular Perſons, Pariſhes and Places, cannot by this Act be ſufficiently provided for and remedied: It is therefore enacted, That ſeven Commiſſioners for each of the ſix Counties extending into the Fens, be conſtituted for the Purpoſes herein mentioned.

§. 21. And for the ſupplying the Number of ſuch Commiſſioners in caſe of Death, or other Avoidance or Incapacity: It is enacted, That within three Months after ſuch Death or Notice of Avoidance or Incapacity, the remaining Commiſſioners of each reſpective County of which ſuch were, or the major Part of them ſhall from time to time nominate and appoint by Deed, under their Hands and Seals, to be enrolled in the *Chancery*; ſome other Perſon or Perſons reſiding within the ſame County, in Place or Stead, *&c.*

Which Commiſſioners, or Seven or more of them, ſhall hear and determine Complaints, Grievances, *&c.* as therein expreſſed, relating to, or occaſioned by the Draining or Maintaining of the ſaid Great Level, and to award Satisfaction out of the 95,000 Acres.

§. 23. And in caſe the ſaid Earl of *Bedford* and his Participants, or the ſaid Corporation ſhall through or by reaſon of their Undertaking, or Draining aforeſaid, in the 6th Year of his late Majeſty's Reign, of ever bleſſed Memory, *have done, or hereafter ſhall do any Act or Acts, to the Prejudice of Navigation; and whereby Navigation in the ſaid Rivers of* Ouſe *and* Grant, *and all other Rivers now navigable, paſſing through the ſaid Level,* (and the River of *Weſt*-Water being a Branch of the River of *Ouſe*, if it be conſiſting with the Draining) *or in any of them:* Or ſuch other Drove-Ways or Bridges, within or without the ſaid Level, as have been made, or cauſed to be made by the Adventurers, and have been by them maintained, unleſs there be ſome Agreement to the contrary: *Be, or hereafter ſhall be interrupted, obſtructed, and made worſe*: That then the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſeven or more of them, whereof the Vicechancellor for the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, the Mayor of the Town of *Cambridge*, and the Mayor of the Town of *King's-Lyn*, for the Time being, to be Three: If they upon notice left at their reſpective Habitations, ſhall think fit to be preſent from time to time; ſhall and may decree the ſame to be made good and amended, at the proper Coſts and Charges of the ſaid Corporation, within a convenient Time as to their Judgments ſhall ſeem meet.

§. 24. And in caſe it ſhall happen and ſo fall out, that the ſaid Corporation ſhall neglect or refuſe to repair and make good the ſame, according to the Order and Decree of the ſaid Commiſſioners, and within the Time limited by

them, that then it ſhall and may be lawful to and for the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſeven or more of them, by Warrant under their Hands and Seals atteſted, to Tax the ſaid 95,000 Acres in ſuch Sum and Sums of Money, as to their Judgment ſhall ſeem meet, for the *making, preſerving, and keeping the Navigation in any of the aforeſaid Rivers; as the ſame was in the ſaid Sixth Year of King* Charles I. Which ſaid Sum or Sums of Money ſo to be aſſeſſed or taxed by the ſaid Commiſſioners, ſhall within 20 Days next after the Notice thereof given to the Governor or Treaſurer of the ſaid Corporation, be paid unto ſuch Perſon or Perſons as the ſaid Commiſſioners ſhall nominate and appoint to receive the ſame. And in caſe the ſaid Governor or Treaſurer of the ſaid Corporation, after notice given as aforeſaid, ſhall refuſe or neglect to pay the ſaid Sum or Sums of Money as aforeſaid: That then the ſaid Commiſſioners, or any ſeven or more of them, ſhall have full Power and Authority to impower the ſaid Perſon or Perſons, to levy the ſaid Sum or Sums of Money, by Diſtreſs or Diſtreſſes to be taken upon the ſaid 95,000 Acres, or any part thereof: And to make Sale of the ſaid Diſtreſs or Diſtreſſes ſo taken, and ſell the ſame, and render the Overplus unto the ſaid Governor or Treaſurers, deducting the reaſonable Charges of their Labour and Pains therein. All which ſaid Sum and Sums of Money, to be taxed or levied by the Authority aforeſaid, ſhall be expended and laid out in preſerving and keeping the ſaid Navigation as aforeſaid, and maintaining the ſame according to the true Intent and Meaning of this Statute.

§. 25. If 8000 Acres are drowned 12 Months together, thoſe Commiſſioners ſhall aſſeſs Taxes for Draining.

§. 26. And in caſe the Corporation ſhall neglect or refuſe Payment, (*ut antea*) whereupon the Goods of particular Perſons, *&c.* ſhall be diſtrained or ſold, or his or their Lands ſequeſtred, that then the ſame ſhall be aſſeſſed and taxed upon the whole 95,000 Acres: And further Remedy, *&c.*

§. 27. Commiſſioners to inform themſelves, by examining Witneſſes upon Oath.

And the Commiſſioners themſelves to take an Oath, as in the Act preſcribed.

All Decrees of the Commiſſioners to be final.

Places of their ſitting from the 29th of *September*, to the 26th of *March*, to be at *Huntington*; and from the 25th of *March* to the 30th of *September*, to be at *Ely* in every Year: Unleſs the Commiſſioners, or ſeven of them ſhall appoint ſome other Place, being a Market Town; and by Warrant under their Hands and Seals, declare the Places and Times of their after Meeting: Which Warrant ſhall be publiſhed in open Market, where they laſt ſate, between twelve and two, on ſome Market Day, one Month at leaſt before time of Meeting: And have Power by ſuch Warrant to Summons Parties and Witneſſes to appear before them.

None who have Intereſt in the Level to be a Commiſſioner.

§. 28. And it is provided, that ſuch Commiſſioners may give and make Satisfaction out of the 95000 Acres, to ſuch Perſon or Perſons, whoſe Lands or Intereſts therein (by any new Works to be made without the ſaid Level, for conveying the Waters to Sea) ſhall be made worſe in Quality, Condition, or Value, proportionable to the Loſs and Damage the Parties ſhall receive thereby.

§. 33. And if the Commiſſioners do not make Satisfaction within 12 Months, the Barons of the *Exchequer* to be a Judicature from thence for thoſe Purpoſes.

§. 34. And it is enacted, That if any Breaches happen in any the Banks, Saſſes, Sluices, Tunnels, or other Works within the ſaid Great Level, or in any Works without the Great Level for conveying the Waters, or by reaſon of ſome inevitable Accident; the ſame ſhall be repaired and made good in convenient time by the Corporation, *&c.* But no other Charge ſhall be laid upon them, for or in reſpect of ſuch Breaches, nor ſhall be inforced to give to any other Perſon any recompence for any Loſs or Damage which ſhall happen, by reaſon of their making neceſſary and ſufficient Banks for the defending the ſaid Level from being overflown, and for the leading of the Waters of the ſaid Level in their Channels, as now they run unto their Outfall at Sea.

The true Content or Number of Acres in the Fens, deſcrib'd in the general Plat, lying without the Fen Dikes; as they were deliver'd by* Will. Hayward, *Gent. Surveyor upon his Oath at* Wisbech, *the* 13th *of* July, 1605.

	Acres.
BURROUGH great Fen, with ſome Severals by Cat-water, contain	8015
Burrough little Fen, contain	900
Croyland Fens in three Pieces, *viz.* contain	2000
Certain ſeveral Fens and wet Meadows lying in *Ely*, between *Burrough* little Fen, *Burrough* great Fen, and *Catwater*, contain	763
Thorney Grounds, containing in all 15,850, whereof in hard Land 400 Acres. In Fen	15,450
Wisbech Hundred high Fen, with *Sutton* Fen and *Trokenholt* Severals, contain	8365
Ladweres, *Ixwellmoor*, the Rivers, *&c.* and other Sevetals between *Coldham* Bank, *Biſhop's* Dike, the Diviſion of *March*, *Welney* River, and *Darſey* Lode	8740
Wittleſey and *Stanground* common Fens, with divers Severals, and the Severals between the old *Eea* and *Thorny* Bounds; the Diviſion of *Wiſbech* high Fen and *Doddington* Fens, and from that Diviſion to the high Stream, and *Ramſey* Mere to *Knots* Delph, and by that Delph up to *Horſey* Bridge, (in which Bound *Ramſey* hath a great Part of a Fen next to *Ramſey* Mere, containing 2800 Acres) contain	24,435
Other Fens between the ſaid Delph, the high Stream, *Ugmere*, *Wittleſey* Mere, and ſo by *Conqueſt-lode* to *Pocket-holm*, and the high Lands	7390
Certain Fens in *Huntingtonſhire*, between the high Lands Skirts, and *Ramſey* Hards and Mere, and the ſaid high Stream and Conqueſt-lode	13,455
Other Fens of *Huntingtonſhire*, lying between *Ramſey* Mere, the high Stream to *Benwich*; the *Weſt* Water to *Erith* Bridge, and the Skirts of the high Land between the ſaid Bridge and *Ramſey* Hards	13,340
The Fens of *Doddington*, *cum membr.* Common and Several	32,000
Hony Fens, in all 370; *viz.* Hardland 90 — Fen	280
Chattery's Fens, together with certain Fens of *Sutton*, and *Bial* Fen, with ſome Severals lying between the Bounds of *Doddington* and *Hony*, the *Weſt* Water, *Sutton-lode*, and *Ox* Willow-lode, contain	20,700
Sutton Fens, on the *South* of *Sutton-lode*, between the *Weſt* Water *Haddenham* Fens, and the Hards of *Haddenham*, *Sutton* and *Mepal*, contain	2,910
Haddenham Fens, between the former Fens, the River of *Ouſe*, *Wilberton* Fens, and *Haddenham* Hards	3870
Willingham Fens on the *South* of the *Ouſe*, on the *Weſt* of *Aldrich Calſey*, beſides *Hempſal* on the *Eaſt* thereof	2920
Wilberton Fens, with part of other Fehs between the *Ouſe* and Hard land, to *Ely* Bridge, contain	2790
Grunty Fen compaſſed with the high Lands, containeth	1694
A Fen more *North*, between *Sutton-lode* by *Coveney*, and the hard Land of divers Towns compaſſing it	3780
Downham Wodfen, and other Fens between the Fens of *Littleport*, the *Ouſe* and *Ely*, hard Lands to the Town	2440
The Fens of *Littleport* on both Sides of the *Ouſe* Common and Several	12,660
Weſtmoor South of *Darſey-lode* and *Weſt* of *Welney* River, together with divers Severals	15,360
Certain Fen Grounds Common and Several, between *Welney* River and the Cawſey Dike in *Upwel*	1105
Certain Fens Common and Several, between *Welney* River, *Maid-lode*, the *Ouſe* and *Littleport* Grounds	8600
Beſides a part of *Wisbech* high Fen lying in *Walterſie*, with divers Severals, containing	4320
Marſhland Fen, containing	4220

* From this Plat was copied the Plan and Deſcription of the Fens printed in this Work.

And

	Acres.
And many other Low-grounds between *Maidlode* and *Spalding* River, the Fen-banks and Sea-banks, which will be made dry by the general Draining.	
The Fens between *Helgay* Bridge and *Stoke* Bridge, by the River on the *South Eaſt*; the high Lands of *Stoke*, *Wretton*, *Weerham*, *Deerham*, *Roxham*, on the *North*; and the Grounds of *Edmund Skipwith*, Gent. on the *Weſt*, contain	2900
The Fens between the high Grounds of *Hockwold*, *Wilton*, *Feltwell*, *Methold* and *Northwold* high Lands on the *Eaſt*; *Stoke* River on the *North*; the Imbanked Grounds of *Helgay*, *Modney*, *Sothery*, and in part the River of *Ouſe* on the *Weſt*; and *Brandon* River, from *Prieſt-houſes* to *Brand*-Bridge, contain	23,290
The Fens between *Brandon* River on the *North*; the River of *Ouſe* in part, and *Whelpmoor* and *Burnt* Fen on the *Weſt*; *Mildenhall* high Lands and River on the *South*; and the high Lands from *Mildenhall* to *Brandon*	22,120
Between *Mildenhall* River on the *North Eaſt*; *Ouſe* from *Prick-willow* to *Ely* Bridge on the *North Weſt*; *Stuntny* and *Soham* Cauſeway, the high Ground of *Stuntney*, *Norney*, *Soham*, *Iſleham* and *Worlington* on the *South* and *Eaſt*	11,780
Between the ſaid Cauſeway and the high Land of *Stuntney*, on the *North*; *Ouſe* and *Grant*, from *Ely* Bridge to *Upwere*, on the *Weſt*; *Wickyn* high Grounds on the *South*; and *Soham Eaſt*	4297
The Fens and Low-grounds between *Grant*, from *Upwere* to *Clayhith* and *Horningſey* High-grounds on the *Weſt*; the Way from *Quoy* to *Cambridge*, and *Quoy* and *Botteſham* High-grounds on the *South*; the two *Swaffhams*, *Reach*, *Burwell*, *Lanward* and *Fordham* on the *Eaſt*; and of *Soham* and *Wickin*, *North*	11,950
The Fens beeween the High-grounds of *Feverſham* and *Hinton*, *Weſt*; of *Fulburn*, *South*; of great and little *Wilbram*, *Eaſt*; of *Botteſham* and *Quoy*, *North*	1240
Between *Grant*, from *Harrimere* to *Ditton* on the *Eaſt*; *Ouſe*, from *Harrimere* to *Aldrich* Bridge on the *North*; *Hempſall*, *Ircham*, and the High-Grounds of *Rampton*, *Weſt*; and the High-grounds of *Cottenham* and *Denny* Abby, *South*	9480
Hempſall and *Ireham*, *Eaſt* of *Aldrich* Cauſeway, contain	823
The Low-grounds from St. *Ives* to *Erith* Bridge on the *South*; the Fens of *Willingham* and *Over* on the *Eaſt*; the High-grounds of *Swaſy*, *Draiton* and *Stanton*, on the *South*; and the High-grounds of *St. Ives*, *Weſt*	3529
The Low-lands between *St. Ives*, on the *North* Side of the *Ouſe*, between the ſaid River on the *South* and *Eaſt*, and the High-land of *Bluntſham*, *Hallywell*, and *St. Ives*, on the *North* and *Weſt*, do contain	1871
Summa tot Omnia	307,242

The Gradual Acre Tax of the 95,000 Acres, for maintaining the Works of Draining.

THE 85,000 Acres, part of the 95,000 Acres which were at the firſt Undertaking caſt into Lots; every Adventurer then had his Share in that Diviſion of good and bad Land, and all Land taxed alike *per* Acre; but afterwards being divided into different Hands, as People became Purchaſers of good or bad, the bad Land alone would not bear the Burthen of the Tax, for that there being much difference in the Soil of the ſaid Lands, and ſome part much more ſubject to overflowing than others, and not capable of being ſo well drained: Therefore by the Act 10 *Car.* 2. The Power given to the Governor, Bailiffs

and Conſervators, for their laying of Taxes, and ſelling Land for Non-payment, was alter'd from *Whitſun*-Week, unto *Wedneſday*, *Thurſday*, and *Friday*, after the firſt *Sunday* in *April* every Year, and at no other time; (the time of the Year being found then moſt convenient) and by the ſaid Act, for the Reaſons aforeſaid, the 95,000 Acres were for the future to be rated by way of a Gradual Acre Tax of Eleven Degrees or Rates, as are particularly hereafter mentioned in the Lots. Except the 12,000 Acres which are rated at 1 *s.* 3 *d. per* Acre, when the 83,000 Acres are taxed at 6110 *l.* 7 *s.* 1 *d.* ½; and ſo in proportion.

There is of the 83,000 Acres part of the 95,000 Acres of Adventure Land, 80,000 Acres divided into 20 Lots or Shares, 4,000 Acres in each Lot. The Remainder 3,000 Acres lieth Overplus. The 20 Lots, and how rated, now to the Draining Taxes are as followeth.

First Lot.

Sorts rated.		Acres	R.	P.
5	*Addenham* Common, A.	100	00	00
70[2] 62 / 70 73	*Botſham* High Fen	140	00	00
6	*Sutton* Meadland next *Middlemore*	131	00	00
3	*Weſtmore* N°. *Bedford* River A.	400	00	00
3	*Coveney* Severals A.	073	00	00
4	*Helgey* Common by Captain *Skipwith*'s Bank	318	00	00
2	*Townmoors*, *Arkinſtal*, *Unley* Several, *Eaſtmoor* or *Little Shell*, and *Thompſon*'s Fen in *Lakingheath*, and the two Sedge Fens, and *Coplow* Fen *in Mildenhall* A.	200	00	00
4	*Whelpmoore*, *Lowellmoor*, and *Spaindelf* A.	478	00	00
4	*Stuntney* Common	032	00	00
4	*Stuntney* Farm	022	00	00
4	*Stuntney* ſmall Severals	012	00	00
3	Part of *Thorney*	100	00	00
4	One Several in *Woodwalton*	015	00	00
3	*Grunty Fen* A.	100	00	00
3	*Beezeling*'s Fen in *Doddington*	344	00	00
3	*Creek* Fen in *Doddington* A. next *March*	200	00	00
4	*Stoney* Fen and *Block* Fen Common A.	500	00	00
5	*Somerſham* Common A.	300	00	00
4	*Great Bradnymoor* a Several in *Doddington*	162	02	00
4	Severals of *Doddington*	032	02	00
2	*Hale* Fen Common. and *Sedge* Fen a Several by *Welney*, next *Welney* A.	200	00	00
5	Severals of *Well* and *Welney*	040	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* N°.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* S°.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Second Lot.

5	*Haddenham* Common B.	100	00	00
5	*Sutton* in *North* Fen	272	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North B.	400	00	00
3	*Coveney* Severals B.	073	00	00
1	*Methwold* Common, and *Feltwell* North Fen A.	400	00	00
1	*Townmoors* in *Lakingheath*, &c. B.	200	00	00
4	*Whelpmoor*, &c. B.	461	00	00
4	*Ladus* Fen A. next unto *Creek* Fen	115	00	00
1	*Botſham*, *Quy* & *Ditton*, part Inter-common A. next *Botſham Load*	100	00	00
4	*Langwood* Fen in *Chatreſſe* A.	300	00	00

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
3	*Creek* Fen in *Doddington* B.	260	00	00
4	*Stoney* and *Block* Fen Common B.	400	00	00
4	Severals in *March*	068	00	00
4	*Somersham* Common B.	300	00	00
2	*Upwood* Fen, lying next toward *Ramsey*	451	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South, the 20th Piece from *Welney*	050	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

THIRD LOT.

125 2 125 3	*Isleham* Common, A	250	00	00
11	*Middleditch* Fen in *Wivelingham*	077	01	00
11	*Great Shelfould* in *Wivelingham*	012	03	00
4	*Sutton*, the Remainder of *North* Fen, and the middle next towards *Chatres* Fen, and 6 0 26 in *West* Fen adjoining	032	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North	200	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South, A.	200	00	00
5	*Ramsey* Severals, A.	078	00	00
1	*Methwold* Common, *&c.* B.	400	00	00
1	*Townmoors*, &c. C.	200	00	00
3	*Brandon* Commons	350	00	00
4	*North Cloud*, a Common of *Lakinheath*	058	00	00
3	Severals of *Lakinheath*, A.	052	00	00
4	*Ladus* Fen, B.	115	00	00
3	*Grunty* Fen, B.	100	00	03
4	*Langwood* Fen, B.	300	00	00
4	*Whitemore* in *Daddington*, A. the Parcel of 300 Acres diked out	300	00	00
4	*Stoney* and *Block* Fen Common, C.	400	00	00
3	*Eusymoor*, *Well Pingle* and *Farmers* Fen, A.	500	00	00
4	*Connington* Severals, A. in the greater Fen	200	00	00
5	*Well* and *Welney* Severals	079	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North N. the Thirteenth, *&c*,	050	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South S. *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

FOURTH LOT.

5	*Haddenham* Common C.	100	00	00
7	*Barway* Middle and *Fordy* in *Soham*	231	00	00
5	*Honey* Fen in *Chatres*	040	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South B	400	00	00
5	*Ramsey* Severals, B.	074	00	00
1	*Methwold* Common, *&c.* C.	400	00	00
1	*Townsmoor*, &c. D.	200	00	00
4	*Whelpmoor*, &c. C.	461	00	00
3	Sir *Miles Sandy*'s imbanked Ground B.	115	00	00
3	*Grunty* Fen C.	126	00	00
4	*Whenny* Fen in *Chatres*	300	04	00
4	*Whitmoor* in *Doddington* B. next unto the 300 Acres diked out	400	00	00
3	*Eusymoor*, &c. C.	548	00	00
4	*Somersham*, C.	300	00	00
2	*Feltwell* Severals, D.	080	00	00
2	*Caldecott* Severals	056	00	00
3	Mr. *Tirrill*'s ground by *Priests* Houses 24 and 3.	027	00	00

4 Seve-

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
4	Severals of *Doddington*	042	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North E. the Fifth, *&c.*	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South K. *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Fifth Lot.

5	*Haddenham* Common D.	078	00	00
5	*Stretham* Common	172	02	00
5	*Sutton* South of *Bedford* River, next unto the Fens of *Haddenham* and *Wentworth*	120	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, C.	400	00	00
5	*Berry Mow* Fen	045	00	00
7	*Ramſey* Severals, D.	008	00	00
5	*Witcham* Common 10 Acres, and Several A. 4 Acres	014	00	00
5	*Chatres* Severals	005	00	00
3	*Deerham* Commons	200	00	00
3	*Lakinheath*, *Townmoors*, &c. E.	200	00	00
5	*Whelpmoor*, &c. D.	661	00	00
2	*Knights* Fen in *Hockwold* and *Redmoor* Grounds, A.	111	00	00
6	*Throcken-holt* by *Clows-Croſs*, A. next *Clows-Croſs*	005	00	00
4	*Grunty* Fen, D.	100	00	00
3	*Norwold* Common, A. next unto *Stoke* Bridge	200	00	00
3	*Weſt* Fen and *Weſt* Fen Cloſe, A.	483	00	00
5	*Whitmoor*, C. next unto *Wisbech* Fens	300	00	00
4	*Somerſham* Commons, D.	300	00	00
4	*Middlemoor* in *Ramſey*, A.	400	00	00
3	*Connington* Severals, B.	081	00	00
5	Severals of *Well* and *Welney*	016	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, R. the fourth Piece from *Welney*	050	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Sixth Lot.

125 2 125 3	*Iſleham*, B.	250	00	00
11	*Clattocks* or *Longbridge* in *Wivelingham*	053	00	00
11	*Babyſhurn* in *Wivelingham*	013	03	00
11	*Upnear* Farm in *Wicken*	005	00	00
5	*Lammas* Ground in *Wicken*, near *Upnear* Farm	023	01	00
6	*Sutton* in Meadlands, next to the Grounds mentioned in the firſt Lot	025	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, D.	400	00	00
4	*Mepall* Severals, A.	073	00	00
1	*Methwold*, &c. D.	400	00	00
2	*Townſmoor*, &c. F.	200	00	00
2	*Whelpmoore*, &c. E.	461	00	00
4	*Ladus* Fen, C.	115	00	00
2	*Weerham*, *Wretton* and *Stoke* Com. next towares *Stoke*	336	00	00
4	*Gurfe* and *Gore* in *Chatres*, A. next *Chatres*	200	00	00
3	*Dicamoor* next *Weſtwater*	156	00	00
3	*Horſemoor* in *Doddington*, A.	200	00	00
3	*Euſymoor*, &c. B.	500	00	00
2	*Hale* Fen and *Sedge* Fen by *Welney*, B.	200	00	00
5	Severals of *Well* and *Welney*	289	00	00

3 *Weſt-*

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
3	*Weſtmoor* North C.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, H, *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Seventh Lot.

115 2 115 3	*Iſleham* Common, C.	230	00	00
9	*Wilburton* Common and Several	124	00	00
8	*Rampton* Commons	016	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, E.	400	00	00
4	*Mepall* Severals, B.	075	00	00
1	*Methwold*, &c. E.	400	00	00
2	*Townſmoor*, &c. G.	200	00	00
2	*Feltwell* South Fen and *Mow* Fen, A.	161	00	00
150 3 150 4	*Mildenhall* burnt Fen, *Ely* great *Shell* and *Shippey*, A.	300	00	00
3	Sir *Miles Sandy*'s imbanked Ground C. next *Crouchmoor*	115	00	00
4	Sir *Henry Willoughby*'s Several in *Southerey*, Weſt of the River *Ouſe*	076	00	00
4	*Curſe* and *Gore* in *Chatres* B. next *Doddington*	200	00	00
3	*Dicamoor* in *Doddington*, A.	200	00	00
3	*Horſemoor*, B.	200	00	00
2	*Hale* Fen and *Sedge* Fen by *Welney* C, next unto the remaining part of *Sedge* Fen	195	00	00
3	*Euſymoor*, &c. D.	500	00	00
3	*Middlemoore* in *Ramſey* B.	400	00	00
4	Sir *Oliver Cromwell*'s Severals in *Ramſey*, A.	108	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, K. *&c.*	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, O. *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Eighth Lot.

3	*Swaffham* High Fen, A.	200	00	00
A. R. P. 39. 3. 32. 8. 48. 0. 8. 11.	*Haddenham* Severals	138	00	00
5	*Sutton* South of *Bedford* River	032	00	00
4	*Byall* Fen, A.	400	00	00
4	*Mepall* Common	053	00	00
4	Severals of *Mepall*, C.	022	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southerey* Commons, A.	300	00	00
1	*Lakinheath*, &c. H.	200	00	00
150 2 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. B.	300	00	00
2	*Feltwell* South Fen and *Mow* Fen B.	161	00	00
2	*Knight*'s Fen and *Redmoor* Grounds B,	115	00	00
1	*Botſham*, *Horningſey*, &c. B.	100	00	00
7	*Norwold* Common by *Stoke*, North of *Wiſſey*	029	00	00
4	*Langwood* Fen in *Chatres*	320	00	00
3	*Weſt* Fen and *Weſt* Fen Cloſe, B,	525	00	00
3	*Middlemoor* C.	400	00	00
1	*Poolings* in *Hockwold*	100	00	00
4	Sir *John Watt*'s Grounds in *Londoners* Fen	352	00	00
4	*Hen. Middle* in *Londoners* Fen	010	00	00
4	Severals of *Doddington*	042	03	00

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* O.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, C.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Ninth Lot.

7	*Denver* Fen South of *Bedford* River	124	00	00
6	Mr. *Wendye*'s Ground in *Chatres*	234	00	00
4	*Widdon* Severals in *Mepall*	008	00	00
11	*Bream* Farm by *Ely*	004	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, F.	200	00	00
4	*Byall* Fen, B.	200	00	00
3	*Coveney* Severals, C.	075	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southery* Commons, B.	300	00	00
150 2 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. C.	300	00	00
1	*Townmoors*, &c. I.	200	00	00
3	A Several in *Lakinheath* by *Croſſwater*	008	00	00
2	*Hockwold* and *Wilton* Common, A.	253	00	00
4	*Ladus* Fen, D.	115	00	00
3	*Read*'s Fen in *Helgey*	360	00	00
1	*Swaffham* Sedge Fen 180 Acres, part of high Fen 5 Acres, part of *Croyle* 4 Acres	189	00	00
3	*Weſt* Fen and *Weſt* Fen Cloſe, C.	500	00	00
2	*Warbois* Fen, *Wiſtow* Fen, *Ramſey*, *Eaſtmoor*, and *Pulver* Fen, and *Turfe* Fen in *Doddington*, A.	500	00	00
4	*Denton* Common	156	00	00
2	*Knobhalls* in *Welney*, South of *Bedford* River	019	00	00
1	*Common-piece* of *Welney*	134	00	00
2	*Loveokes*, a Several adjoining to *Common-piece*	021	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, T. *&c.*	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, T. *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Tenth Lot.

8	*Denver* Fen North of *Bedford* River	256	00	00
9	Several of *Denver*, by the Grounds of *Well*	004	00	00
8	Sir *Henry Willoughby*'s Several in *Southery*, Eaſt of *Ouſe*	076	00	00
5	*Lammas* Grounds in *Wicken*, next unto high Fen	021	00	00
3	Mr. *Barrow*'s imbanked Ground in *Wicken*	007	00	00
7	*Stacks* in *Wivelingham*	007	00	00
2	*Croyle* in *Swaffham*, A. next the Hard Lands	200	00	00
2	*Burwell* Common, A.	247	00	00
2	Sir *Edward Peyton*'s Sedgey Several in *Wicken*	014	00	00
6	*Rowey* in *Somerſham*	011	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southerey* Common, C.	300	00	00
1	*Townmoors*, &c. K.	200	00	00
150 2 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. D.	300	00	00
1	*Hockwold* and *Wilton* Common, B.	222	00	00
4	*Littleport* Severals, A.	041	00	00
3	Mr. *Gibbon*'s Ground, called *Warners*, A. next *Redmoor*	115	00	00
1	*Botſham*, *Horningſey*, &c. C.	100	00	00
3	*Norwold* Common, B.	200	00	00

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
4	*Normoor* in *Chatres*, A. next to *Honey*	400	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. B.	500	00	00
3	*Horſemoor*, &c. D.	287	00	00
4	Sir *Robert Bell*'s Ground in *Londoners* Fen	136	02	00
4	Sir *Lewis Treſham*'s Grounds in *Londoners* Fen	093	01	00
4	Mr. *Fincham*'s Ground in *Londoners* Fen	011	03	00
4	The Ground in *Londoners* Fen, late Mr. *Fincham*'s	013	01	00
2	Part of *Sedge* Fen in *Welney*, North of *Bedford* River, Eaſtward	001	00	00
3	Part of *Knobbals* in *Welney*, North of *Bedford* River	009	00	00
5	Three Severals in *Well*, lying between *Popham's Eea* and *Newdike*	065	00	00
4	Severals in *Doddington*	062	01	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, H. *&c.*	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.*	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Eleventh Lot.

5	*Neatmoor* in *Upwell*, A.	250	00	00
5	*Middlemoor* in *Sutton*	037	00	00
5	*Coxneſſ*'s and Mr. *Fetherell*'s Hamlet in *Sutton*	006	00	00
5	*Weſt* Fen near unto *Sutton* Meadland, A.	076	00	00
4	*Byall* Fen, C.	400	00	00
4	*Mepall* Severals of Mr. *Carter*'s, by *Fure* Fen	018	00	00
3	*Coveney* Severals, D.	056	00	00
2	*Methwold*, &c. F.	488	00	00
1	*Townmoors*, &c. L.	200	00	00
3	*Norney* Farm	079	00	00
4	*Littleport* Severals, B.	203	00	00
3	*Roxham* Common	094	00	00
5	*Sutton* in *Holland*, A. next unto the *Wride*	115	00	00
4	*Pymoor* near *Wichford*	152	00	00
4	*Normoor* in *Chatres*, B.	400	00	00
4	The *Middle* in *Doddington*	200	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. C.	500	00	00
3	*Ravely* Fen in *Ramſey*	229	00	00
4	Sir *William Cockain*'s Ground in *Londoners* Fen	171	00	00
2	Part of *Sedge* Fen in *Welney*, lying next of *Bedford* River	010	00	00
1	*Feltwell* Severals, A.	216	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* A.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* S.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Twelfth Lot.

4	*Waterbeach*, *Joyſt* Fen, *Lammas* Ground adjoining unto *Joyſt* Fen, and the Several Grounds of Sir *Edward Peyton*, and Mr. *Dalton*, A.	250	00	00
5	*Sutton* Grounds, South of *Bedford* River, lying next to the Grounds of *Sutton*, of the firſt Lot	109	02	00
5	Part of *Sutton* Weſt Fen, B.	010	02	00
2	*Croyle* in *Swaffham*, B.	200	00	00
6	One Several in *Woodwalton*	036	00	00
1	The remainder of *Sautrey* Fen, from the King's part	006	02	00
5	Severals of *Chatres*, A.	230	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southerey* Common, D.	300	00	00

2 *Town-*

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
2	*Townmoors*, &c. M.	200	00	00
522[a] 2 / 40 4	*Whelpmoor*, &c. F.	562	00	00
4	*Ladus* Fen, E.	115	00	00
302[a] 1 / 88 7	*Downham* in the *Iſle* Common and Severals	390	00	00
4	*Elme* Common and Severals	250	00	00
3	*Weſt* Fen, and *Weſt* Fen Cloſe, D.	500	00	00
4	*Stoney* and *Block* Fen Common, D.	400	00	00
4	*Somerſham* Common, E.	333	00	00
5	*Lanbeach*, a Several in *Upwell*	007	02	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* F.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* M.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

THIRTEENTH LOT.

4	*Neatmoor* by *Upwell*, B.	250	00	00
7	*Wicken* High Fen, A. next towards *Wicken*	120	00	00
3	*Hale* Fen near *Coveny*	180	00	00
1	*Burwell* Common, B.	293	00	00
1	Sir *Robert Heath*'s Several Grounds in *Soham*	420	00	00
3	*Lakinheath* Severals, B.	094	00	00
1	*Townmoors*. &c. M.	200	00	00
3	*South Cloud*, a Common of *Lakinheath*	047	00	00
150[a] 2 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. E.	300	00	00
3	Sir *Miles Sandy*'s imbanked Ground, A. next *Pr.* Houſes	070	00	00
3	Mr. *Hawkins Crouchmoor*, next *Hale* Fen	045	00	00
2	*Weerham*, *Wretton*, and *Stoke* Common, B. next towards *Deerham*	200	00	00
4	*Stilton* Common	160	00	00
3	*Weſt* Fen, and *Weſt* Fen Cloſe, E.	500	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. D.	500	00	00
2	*Upwood* Fen, adjoining to *Whittleſea* Way	405	00	00
4	Sir *Oliver Cromwel*'s Severals, B.	069	00	00
5	Severals of *Welney*	020	00	00
4	Severals of *March* and *Doddington*	026	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* C.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* E.	040	00	00
		4000	00	00

FOURTEENTH LOT.

100[a] 2 / 100 3	*Iſleham* Common, D.	200	00	00
11	*Over* Common	171	00	00
2	*Wicken* Sedge Fen	300	00	00
2	Mr. *Barrow*'s Sedgy Several	021	00	00
2	*Fordham* Common	027	00	00
5	*Wickin* Severals, B.	056	00	00
5	*Crollode* in *Somerſham*	070	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southerey* Common, E.	282	00	00
162[a].2[r].2 / 162 2[r].3	*Mildenhall*, &c. F.	325	00	00
2	*Whelpmoor*, &c. G.	454	00	00
5	*Sutton* in *Holland*, B.	115	00	00

Sorts rated.		Acres	R.	P.
2	*Horningſey* High Fen	100	00	00
4	*Borroughmoor* in *March*	500	00	00
3	Dr. *Samm*'s *Horſemoor* imbanked	225	00	00
3	*Stoney* Fen Several, A.	300	00	00
4	*Warbois*, &c. E.	500	00	00
4	*Ramſey* Common by *Delfe* Dike	108	00	00
1	*Feltwell* Severals, B.	146	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* S.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* D.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Fifteenth Lot.

4	*Swaffham* High Fen, B.	200	00	00
10	*Hempſtall* in *Wivelingham*	053	00	00
5	*Sutton* Weſt Fen, C.	117	00	00
4	*Wisbich* Common, B.	313	00	00
2	*Burwell* Common, C.	160	00	00
2	*Great Metlam*, *Little Metlam*, and the *Hale* in *Soham*, A.	500	00	00
1	*Townmoors*, &c. O.	200	00	00
150 2 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. G.	300	00	00
4	*Thorney* Farm by *Stuntney*	047	00	00
4	*Quaney* Farm	012	00	00
4	*Richard Ward*'s Several in *Littleport* by *Prall*'s *Weare*	003	00	00
4	Several of *Welney* Chapel in *Littleport*	001	00	00
5	*Sutton* in *Holland*, C.	095	00	00
5	Mr. *Gibbon*'s Ground in *Southerey*, lying by *Prieſt*'s Houſes-	020	00	00
4	*Shevens* in *Well* next to the Town of *Upwell*	100	00	00
1	*White* Fen in *Swaffham* next *Botſham* High Fen	200	00	00
4	*Normoor* in *Chatres*, D.	410	00	00
4	*Stoney* Fen Severals, B.	300	00	00
4	*Warbois*, &c. F.	500	00	00
257 2 / 100 4	*Methwold* Several	357	00	00
4	Several of Mr. *Strange* in *Londoners* Fen	012	00	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* L.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* N.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Sixteenth Lot.

4	*Waterbeach*, &c. B.	250	00	00
2	*Byall* Fen, South of *Bedford* River, next to *Oxwillow* Load	100	00	00
5	*Sutton* Weſt Fen, D.	020	00	00
1	*Wisbich* Common, lying between *Moreton*'s *Leam*, and 25 Foot Drain	424	02	00
6	The Remainder of *Holme* Fen from the Earl of *Portland*'s Part	049	00	00
3	*Helgey* and *Southerey* Commons, F.	300	00	00
1	*Lakinheath*, *Townmoors*, &c. P.	295	00	00
150a 1 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. I.	300	00	00
2	*Feltwell* South Fen and *Mow* Fen, C.	166	00	00
5	*Sutton* in *Holland*, D.	115	00	00
4	*Maney* Common and Several	250	00	00

Sorts rated.		Acres.	R.	P.
4	*Normoor* in *Chatres*, C.	400	00	00
2	*Great Bynnimoor* and *Grays* Fen in *Doddington*, lying next unto *Grayes* Fen	294	00	00
4	*Stoney* Fen Several, C.	425	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. G.	500	00	00
4	Severals of *Doddington*	011	02	00
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* R.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* I.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Seventeenth Lot.

4	*Waterbeach*, &c. C.	201	03	00
2	*Byall* Fen, *&c.*	100	00	00
4	*Fidwell* Fen in *Stretham*	060	00	00
11	*Little Shelfould* in *Wivelingham*	007	01	00
11	By *Erith* Sluice	002	00	00
4	*Wisbech* Common, A.	473	00	00
2	*Great Metlam*, &c. B.	500	00	00
2	*Feltwall* South Fen and *Mow* Fen	269	00	00
1	*Hockwold* and *Wilton* Common, C.	293	01	00
4	*Labus* Fen, F.	105	00	00
2	Mr. *Pratt*'s Several in *Hockwold*	010	00	00
4	*Shevens* next toward *Welney*	100	00	00
1	*White* Fen next towards the Hard Lands	211	00	00
2	*Wich* Fen and *Stow* Fen in *March*	200	00	00
3	*Dicamoor*, B.	200	00	00
3	*Stoney* Fen Severals, D.	300	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. H.	500	00	00
4	Mr. *Peyton*'s Severals by *Hobb*'s Dike in *March*	133	00	20
4	*Peter Williams* adjoining Severals	034	02	10
3	*White*'s Fen, a Several by *Benwick*	119	01	00
4	*Brown*'s Fen by *Benwick*, a Several by Dr. *Samms*	050	00	20
5	Severals of *Well* and *Welney*	030	03	30
3	*Weſtmoor* North, *&c.* U.	050	00	00
2	*Weſtmoor* South, *&c.* B.	050	00	00
		4000	00	00

Eighteenth Lot.

4	*Neatmoor*, C.	250	00	00
5	*Wicken* High Fen	030	00	00
6	*Langmoor* and *Botſgans* in *Stretham*	017	02	00
5	*Sutton* Weſt Fen, E.	073	02	00
4	*Wisbich* Common, C.	473	00	00
2	*Soham* Commons in *Great Metlam*, &c. C.	569	00	00
6	Two Severals of *Soham*	009	00	00
2	*Hockwold* and *Wilton* Common	182	00	00
150 2 / 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. H.	300	00	00
3	Mr. *Gibbon*'s Ground called *Warners*, B.	075	00	00
6	*Throckenholt*, B.	040	00	00
3	*Aſhwellmoor* by *Coveney*, the South-weſt Part	271	00	00
4	*Rough Weſtmoor* in *Chatres*, A. next *Chatres*	300	00	00
3	*Horſemoor*, C.	200	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. I.	500	00	00
3	*Middlemoor*, D.	300	00	00

Sorts rated.			Acres.	R.	P.
2	*Great Bynnimoor* and *Grays* Fen, next toward the River *Nene*		200	00	00
6	*Marmond*, a Several in *Upwell*		027	01	00
5	The Several Ground in *Well* by *Newscote*		017	03	00
4	The Severals of *Doddington*		065	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North, *&c.* P.		050	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South, *&c.* F.		050	00	00
			4000	00	00

Nineteenth Lot.

7	*Waterbeach* Fen by *Garden Tree*		112	00	00
9	*Cottenham* Common		240	00	00
6	*Sutton* in the Meadlands next towards West Fen		018	00	00
4	*Wisbich* Common, D.		473	00	00
150 2 150 3	*Mildenhall*, &c. K.		300	00	00
2	*Whelpmoor*, &c. H.		760	00	00
3	Mr. *Tower*'s *Crouchmoor* in *Littleport*		070	00	00
3	Part of Mr. *Hawkins*'s *Crouchmoor* adjoining		010	00	00
6	*Throckenholt*, C.		035	00	00
3	*Ashwellmoor* next unto *Downham* West Fen		152	00	00
4	*Rough Westmoor* in *Chatres*, B. next *Beezling*'s Fen		296	00	00
3	*Dicamoor*, C.		200	00	00
3	*Warbois*, &c. K.		550	00	00
4	*Middlemoor* in *Ramsey*, E.		375	00	00
1	*Feltwell* Severals, C.		309	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North, &c. I.		050	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South, *&c.* Q.		050	00	00
			4000	00	00

Twentieth Lot.

3	*Thorney Knarr* Fen		3900	00	00
3	*Westmoor* North, *&c.*		050	00	00
2	*Westmoor* South, *&c.* L.		050	00	00
			4000	00	00

The Three Thousand Acres Overplus.

2	*Woodwalton* Common		937	00	00
3	*Higney* Grounds		100	00	00
6	Part of *Holm* Fen		963	00	00
4	Part of *Byoll* Fen, *&c.*		1000	00	00
			3000	00	00

Note, *That when a Tax of* 5050 l. *is raised on the* 95000 *Acres* (*which is called a single Tax*) *then the first Sort Land of the* 83000 *Acres is taxed* 4 d. per *Acre*; *and so on to Eleven Groats. And the* 12000 *Acres is rated at* 1 s. 1 d. *the Acre. And the Serjeant at Mace of the great Level, by Precept under the Seal of the Corporation, in the Nature of a Writ of* Habere facias Poſſeſſionem *at Common Law, is to deliver Poſſeſſion unto ſuch Purchaſer, as ſhall purchaſe for Non-payment of Taxes any part of the ſaid* 95,000 *Acres.*

PROPOSALS *for Draining the great Level of the Fens, called* Bedford *Level, by the Right Honourable* Richard *Lord* Gorges, *Surveyor-General of the Works of Draining, and Superintendant of the Officers of the Corporation of Adventurers,* May *the* 18th, 1682.

My LORDS *and* GENTLEMEN,

IN obedience to your Order of the 11th of *May* inſtant, I have conſidered how the Middle Level may be better ſecured from drowning, and conſequently how it may be better drained; and in order hereunto, firſt the Defects of the Draining of that Level are to be ſet forth, and is this: That,

There are ſeveral little Brooks, that in Winter, and in ſuch rainy Weather as this is, brings great and incredible Quantities of Water into the upper and remoteſt Part of the Level from the Outfall; and when theſe Waters firſt come in, they fall preſently into the loweſt Grounds of the Level, as *Ugmere*, *Whittleſeymere*, *Brickmere*, which alone is above 3000 Acres, and *Ramſey Mere* about 100; and when all theſe Meres are full of Water, there are no Drains provided, by which theſe Waters may be carried off, but the ſame Drains which are to carry off the Sock and downfall Waters; which laſt mentioned Waters, by reaſon of the diſtance of the Outfall, and little Deſcent all the way, can never go off the Lands till the Brook-waters are ſpent and gone by: For theſe Brook-waters do not run conſtantly, though they are, as aforeſaid, great when they do run; and in ſuch Seaſons as aboveſaid, do run long and almoſt perpetually in Winter time, ſo that the Sock and downfall Waters are ſtopped by theſe Brooks running high; therefore this Level muſt always be ſubject to this, till ſuch time as Proviſion be made to carry theſe Brook-waters to their Outfalls, *For this is a Rule in Draining never to be varied from, where it can be done: That is, to Imbank all Rivers or Brook-waters, to carry them to their Outfalls ſeparate from Sock or downfall Waters.* And in order to purſue this way of Draining, I propoſe the Imbanking of *Connington* Brook from the Hard Lands, and to bring it up to the Gate, at the upper End of the 19 Foot Drain, which leads into the Adventurers Land, taken out of *Holme* Common, and ſo to carry it between Banks by *Dyke* and *Hook-load*, and there take in *Sautry* Brook at the lower End of *Monk*'s Load, and ſo carry them together Imbanked through *Ugg-mere*, and *Brick-mere*, and then by the Channel of the old *Nene* ſtill by Banks, till they meet with *Berry* Brook-waters; and then to carry them all three together, by *Imbanking the old* Nene, and through *Ramſey* Mere on *Glaſſmore* Side thereof, and ſo from thence to *March*; and at *Delph* Dike, and at *Whittleſey* Dike End, muſt be ſet either drawn Sluices or Saſs-heads, to keep thoſe Waters from going backwards into *Whittleſey* Mere, and all the Dikes Ends to be made up into Banks; and *from* March *this River of* Nene *to* Well-Creek *Saſs, is already imbanked all the way on both Sides*; and this *Nene* River from *March* upwards, as far as till it meet with *Berry* Brook is very wide, I believe 100 Foot or better; and ſome Banks or high Ground on each Side of the River, in moſt part of this Reach (except through *Ramſey* Mere) which if but the Dikes were made up, would carry away the greateſt Part of theſe Brooks to *March*, and ſuffer little or no Waters to fall into the Meres. And moſt certainly if no more be done, this alone will prevent theſe Brooks from running conſtantly into theſe Meres as they now do, and ever have done ſince our Draining; and it is not doubted, but it may ſometimes be kept from running over theſe Banks even as they now are, the Dikes End being but ſtopped only; they, nor will, or can raiſe the 10th Part of the Water in thoſe Meres, as comes into them by conſtant running into them as now they do, and have always done hither from the lower End of *Monks* Lode, where *Connington* and *Sautry* Brook fall into *Ugg-mere*; *the River of* Nene *is to be followed to take the Advantage of ſuch Banks as it hath.*

River and downſal Water to be carried ſeparate.

River Nene *and the Brooks to be imbanked, to carry off their Waters.*

If *Well-Creek* runs but a little Rill of Water, and but 4 Foot deep, and at the ſame time eleven Foot deep in Water in the Saſs, with a ſix Foot Water lying upon the Saſs Doors as that time, at Col. *Underwood*'s Letter the 3d Day of *May*, Inſtant, reports, Then it is apparent that Well-Creek *itſelf ought to be*

widened

Well-Creek to be widened.

widened and deepned as much as it can: And this is that which I propoſe for carrying off theſe three Brook-waters.

There are alſo two or three Brooks more, as *Caldecot*, *Yaxley*, and *Faſſet*, and they muſt fall ſtill into *Whittleſey* Meer, as now they do, and I hope without any great Prejudice; when the other three, which are the great Brooks, are thus carried off, as before ſet forth. Some Perſon may be inquiſitive what Operation this *Imbanking theſe Brooks, and the old River of* Nene, from *Standground* Saſs to *Well-Creek* Saſs will have, becauſe by the Act of Parliament you are obliged to *maintain the Navigation to be ſuch as it was in the* 6th *Year of King* Charles I. At that time and before, they could not navigate in the *Nene* in very dry Years, nor oftentimes when they were all drowned; for the Wind did force their Boats to either Side of ſuch little Banks or high Ground as the River *Nene* then had, and now hath; and when the Waters abated never ſo little, their Boats could not get back into the Channel, till they were lifted back; ſo that it is apparent, their Navigation there was uncertain, and ever muſt be: And this was the Condition of the Navigation, before the Draining of *Francis* Earl of *Bedford*, 6 *C.* 1.

It will be neceſſary to inform you, how this Navigation hath been ever ſince the Year 1649. which was the time that *William* Earl of *Bedford* began the Draining, and that hath been thus. From *Well-Creek* Saſs to *Witleſey* Dikes End, hath been always the ſame way, and ever muſt be; only for ſome Years there was a Saſs at *Wells* Town End, to help to carry Boats through the Towns of *Well* and *Upwell*, but it hath been broken and diſuſed, and I think taken up theſe 14 or 15 Years: and to keep the River to run through theſe two Towns, a Draw-Sluice muſt be always maintained, at the upper End of *Popham's Eea*; and from *Whittleſey* Dike End to *Stanground* Saſs, the Navigation hath moſtly gone by *Whittleſey* Dike to *Bevill*'s Leam, and from thence in *Bevill*'s Leam thro' *Whittleſey* Mere, and ſo by old *Nene* to *Stanground* Saſs, which is a ſhorter Way than by the Channel of the old *Nene* to *Stanground* Saſs; and this Navigation hath continued ever ſince 1649, ſometimes better, ſometimes worſe, according to the dryneſs or wetneſs of the Seaſon; but the Navigation from *Whittleſey* Dikes End to *Ramſey*, and from thence up to *Stanground* Saſs, hath not been ſo frequently uſed, or ſcarcely uſed at all, but in ſuch wet Seaſons as hath filled theſe Meers ſo high, that the overflowing of theſe Meers have ſupplied Water for the old *Nene* to navigate in this Reach, either to *Ramſey* or elſewhere that way. Now if the Waters of theſe Brooks be carried as before propoſed, then little or none of theſe Waters will be waſted in the Meers, but theſe Brook-waters will ſupply the Navigation as they come, and ſuch as they are from *Whittleſey* Dikes End to *Ramſey*, and ſo far as *Hook-load*: But when theſe Waters are thus kept out of *Whittleſey* Meer, I judge that *Faſſet*, *Yaxley* and *Coldecot* Brooks will not ſupply ſo much Water as will carry the Navigation through *Whittleſey* Meer, from *Whittleſey* Dikes End, as it hath done of late Years to *Stanground* Saſs. Therefore I propoſe in lieu of this, that the Navigation from *Whittleſey* Dikes End to *Stanground* be carried to *Whittleſey* Dike, up to *Whittleſey* and by the Lode, on the *South* Side of *Whittleſey* by the Lode that leads to *Ravens* Willow, and there to have a Dam made to force the River *Nene* to keep this Lode to *Whittleſey*; by which means the Water that is let in by *Stanground* Saſs, will be kept from falling into *Whittleſey* Meer, and ſupply Water for this Navigation, which will greatly advantage the Town of *Whittleſey*; and I ſhall gladly pay my ſhare of it, becauſe the Town of *Whittleſey* hath always been reſpective to the Corporation. And this is all I can propoſe as to the carrying off the Brook-waters; and as to the providing for the Navigation, as well as this Caſe, with all the Circumſtances and Situation of the Place will bear.

How to carry off the Sock and Downfall.

Now followeth that I propoſe, how the Sock and downfall Waters ſhould be carried away, from all the Lands lying on the *North* Side of the River *Nene*, from *Biſhop*'s Dike up to the hard Lands of *Huntington*: And the main Drain I propoſe, for that is *Bevill*'s Leam, and if the Navigation be carried by *Whittleſey* Dike as before propoſed, then a Tunnel muſt be laid under *Whittleſey* Dike at *Angle* Bridge, to deliver the Water in the upper Part of *Bevill*'s Leam, into the lower Part of *Bevill*'s Leam, and ſo by *Mores* Drain, till it comes to the *North* outring of the 200 Foot belonging to the firſt Lot taken out of Fen, and by that Outring Dike till it comes to the Diviſion Dike, between the firſt and ſecond Lot in *Ladus* Fen, and by the Dike to the River of *Nene*,

or

or by *Moors* Drain, and there to place a Tunnel under the River *Nene*; and from thence through *Reeds* Fen, to the Diviſion Dike, between the 6th and 4th Lots of Adventure Land in *Eaſimer*, there to the 16 Foot Drain; and then a Tunnel under the 16 Foot Drain and High-way into the Dike of the *South* Side of that High-way, till it comes to *Maggs Lake*, and from thence to *London-lode*, and ſo to *Well-Creek* at *Nordale*, and there to have a Tunnel to carry it under *Well-Creek*, into *Marſhland* Cut. And ſo theſe Sock and downfall Waters are carried to the beſt Outfall they can ever have, without ever intermixing with Brook or River Waters: what this way will coſt I cannot tell; but I believe not much more than the other ways that I have here ſpoken of, and which ways muſt be more uncertain than this; and in ſuch wet Seaſons as this, the greateſt Part of it muſt be drowned, beſtow what charge you will, if the Downfall and River Waters be not kept ſeparate: This is all that I can ſay to the Draining of that part of the Middle Level, lying *North* of old *Nene* River.

For that part of the Middle Level lying *South* of the River *Nene*, though there are Upland Waters, as *Fenton-lode*, and the Upland Waters of *Chatteris*, *Doddington* and *March*, yet I ſhall propoſe no new Works for that part of the Level, but the Maintenance of thoſe in being; which is, the *Imbanking* Cranebrook *Waters* on both Sides if occaſion ſhould require, from *Somerſham*'s Town end, to force theſe Waters into the *Counter-waſh* to the *North* Bank of *Bedford* River, and to maintain the 20 Foot Bank and Drain, from where *Cranebrook* Water is forced into the *Counter-waſh*, to the new Sluice directed to be ſet in the 20 Foot Bank within two Miles of *Well-Creek*; and a clear Paſſage to be made in the Counterwaſh, for carrying *Cranebrook* Waters into old *Bedford* River at *Welſhes* Dam; and old *Bedford* River with the Sluices at the lower End of it to be continued, and 20 Foot of the 40 Foot from the *Weſt* Side of the Adventure Land in *Warbois* Fen to be continued: And *Slade-lode* from *Chatteris* Ferry to the 40 Foot to be continued; and the 16 Foot, from the 30 Foot to *Popham*'s *Eea*; and the Croſs-drain, from *Neatmoor* to the 20 Foot; and this is all I can propoſe for the Draining of the Middle Level.

But all theſe Drains ſignify nothing, if the *North* Bank of *Bedford* River, and the *South* Bank of *Morton*'s Leam, be not made ſo ſtrong and high, as to reſiſt a 7 Foot Water.

As to the Draining of the *South* Level, which is more difficult than any of the reſt, by reaſon it is naturally divided into ſo many little ſeveral Levels, by ſo many ſmall Rivers, and all running croſs to the Outfal at *Denver* Dam, from *Botteſham*, *Swaffham* and *Burwell* Levels; there is all done that can be done, *and the Banks that are there muſt be maintained ſtrong enough, and high enough to defend them againſt the River of* Grant; and the Saſs-heads of *Bottſham* and *Swaffham*, and the Saſs at *Reach*, muſt be maintained as they now are; and as any of thoſe Saſs-heads, or Saſs-doors come to decay, to make their Peers of Brick, for the Wooden ones are too often to mend; and that is all can be done to theſe three Levels. *To drain the South Level.*

The Banks of Stretham *and* Waterbeach *Level, muſt alſo be maintained near four Feet high*, with ſuch Tunnels and Sluices as are now in them, to take off the Sock and Downfall; and this is all I can think can be done for this Level: For all theſe laſt mentioned Levels muſt depend upon the Waters of *Grant* River giving way to them to drain. Stretham Level.

For Soam *Level, the* Eaſt *Bank of* Grant *from* Wicken *Hardlands to* Harrimere, *muſt be maintained four Feet high*, and 30 or 40 Foot in the Seat; and from thence the Eaſt *Bank of the River of* Ouſe *ſhould be five Feet high, and* 40 *or* 50 *Foot in the Seat* to *Soam* new River; and the Banks of *Soam* Meer River ought to be of the ſame Dimenſions, becauſe *Grant* ſwells up that way; and from thence the Eaſt *Bank of* Ouſe *ſhould be five Foot high, and* 40 *or* 50 *Foot in the Seat.* From *Soam* River to *Prick-willow* Bridge this Bank ought to be of the ſame height; as alſo the South *Bank of* Mildenhall *River*, from *Prick-willow* Bridge to *Iſleham* Hardlands; the Banks of the River through *Soam* Meer ought to be maintained. Soam Level.

The Tunnels under *Soam* River to be maintained; and the new Drain from that Tunnel, to the Tunnel under *Mildenhall* River, near the 20 Foot Drain, ought to be maintained; and the Tunnel in the *Eaſt* Bank of *Ouſe* at *Knewleſs*; and the Brick Tunnel in the ſame Bank near *Prick-willow*; and the 16 Foot Drain

through *Metham* Fens: And this I conceive is all that can be done for *Soam* Level.

Mildenhall *Level.*

For *Mildenhall* Level: *The* North *Bank of* Mildenhall *River*, from *Mildenhall* hard Lands to Dead Miles end, below *Prick-willow* Bridge, ought to be kept equal to the *South* Bank of the ſame River; and from Dead Miles end, the Eaſt *Bank of* Ouſe *in* Burnt *Fen*, *through* Burnt *Fen to* Littleport-chair, *ought to be at the leaſt five Foot high, and* 50 *Foot in the Seat*; and of the ſame Dimenſions from thence to *Brandon* River, and the South *Bank of* Brandon *River* from *Ouſe* up to *Lakenheath* Lode, of the ſame Dimenſions with the *North* and *South* Bank of *Mildenhall* River; and from *Lakenheath* Lode the ſame Bank unto the hard Lands of *Brandon*, to be of the ſame Dimenſions; the Banks of *Lakenheath* Lode to be kept equal with this Bank, but the Banks of *Lakenheath* Lode, and this of *Brandon*, and thoſe of *Mildenhall*, muſt be made of good Earth brought in Lighters; where good Earth cannot be brought out of the Waſhes of *Mildenhall* and *Brandon* Rivers, for the Earth of the Land Sides of theſe Rivers will never make good Banks.

The Banks to *Earſwell* Brooks, and the Waters of *Blackwell* and *Croſſwell*, muſt be Imbanked as they now are, and care muſt be taken that no Dikes Ends at any time, though in Summer time, be cut through theſe, or any other Banks upon any pretence whatever, but to be preſently made up again. If the Tunnel be made to run under *Mildenhall* River, which hath been damm'd up for ſeveral Years, then the new Drain from this to the Tunnel under *Brandon* River, the new Drain ought to be new done, and made 22 Foot wide, and five Foot deep; and the Tunnel under *Lakenheath* Lode muſt be continued, and the Drain or 12 Foot Dike that leads from this Tunnel, to the Tunnel under *Brandon* River, muſt be ſcoured and kept clean: *Mildenhall* Drain muſt be maintain'd, and the Saſs-head at the End thereof next *Ouſe* muſt be maintained, and the Tunnel in the *Eaſt* Bank of *Ouſe*, at the End of *Outring* Dike, of the Adventure Land in *Whelpmoor*, muſt alſo be maintained; and this is all for *Mildenhall* Level. Tho' probably if it were well and judiciouſly viewed, there would be reaſon to defend this Level from ſome Springs and Rills, about *Audley*, and the Borders of the other Uplands, which may be forced by Banks into *Lakinheath-lode*, or *Mildenhall*; for all ſuch Springs as are found thereabouts run alike both Winter and Summer; and *Blackwell* and *Croſſwell* muſt be Imbanked and forced into *Lakinheath-lode:* And theſe are all can be done for this Level called *Mildenhall* Level.

Feltwell *Level.*

For the Level called *Feltwell* Level, the North *Bank of* Brandon *River from the hard Lands of* Hockwold *and* Wilton *ought to be imbanked to the River of* Ouſe, as the *South* Bank thereof is directed; and from thence the Eaſt *Bank of* Ouſe *to* Stoke *or* Helgay *River muſt be made* 6 *Foot high at leaſt, and* 50 *Foot in the Seat*; and the Saſs-head at *Feltwell* Drains End, in the ſame Bank, and the Saſs-head at the lower End of *Samm*'s Cut in the ſame Bank, to be continued; and the *South* Bank of *Helgay* and *Stoke* River muſt be of the ſame Dimenſion from *Ouſe* to *Helgay* Bridge; and from thence the South *Bank of* Stoke *River ought to be five Foot high and* 40 *Foot in the Seat* to the Uplands of *Methwold*; and the Banks of *Methwold* Brook, both of *Methwold* and *Northwold* Side ought to be maintained; as alſo the *South* Bank of *Stoke* River, from *Methwold* Lode to *Stoke* Bridge of the ſame Dimenſions; and theſe are all the Bounds that are to preſerve *Feltwell* Level. *Feltwell* Drain and *Samm*'s Cut, and the Saſs-head at the lower End of them in *Ouſe* Bank muſt be maintained; and if the Tunnel be made to run under *Brandon* River, which hath been damm'd for ſeveral Years, then the new Drain that leads from it to the Tunnel under *Helgay* or *Stoke* River, muſt be ſcoured and made 25 Foot wide, and five Foot deep: This is all that can be done for *Feltwell* Level.

Deerham *or* Stoke *Level.*

For *Deerham* or *Stoke* Level, the North *Bank of* Stoke *River* from *Helgay* Bridge to *Stoke* Bridge, muſt be of the ſame Dimenſion as the *South* Bank thereof is; and *Roxham* Drain muſt be ſcoured from the Tunnel under *Helgay* or *Stoke* River, up to the Adventure Lands of that Level: And this is all I think can be done for *Stoke* Level.

The Drain for the Tunnel under *Helgay* River muſt be made at leaſt 30 or 35 Foot wide to *Downham Eea*, and *Downham Eea* ought to be deepned from End to End; and two Sluices of 10 Foot Water way a-piece, to be

placed at the lower End of that Drain, if ſuch Sluices be not there already; and this is all that can be done for the *Eaſt* part of the *South* Level. And for the *Weſt* Part of the *South* Level, *Grunty* Fen Drain Banks muſt be maintained of the *South* Level, againſt *Downham* high Lands, to force the Water thereof into the River of *Ouſe* at *Littleport-chair*; and the Saſs-head at old *Welney* River in this Bank, ought to be maintained and carefully kept to open and ſhut as occaſion requires; and from thence the Weſt *Bank of the River of* Ouſe, *to Sir* George Viner's *Lands, muſt be maintained of the Height and Strength of the* Eaſt *Bank of* Ouſe *over againſt it: And from the* North *Side of Sir* George Viner's *Lands, of the ſame Dimenſions to* Denver *Dam*; and the Saſs-head of *Modney* Drains and *Maid* Lode muſt be maintained. And *Maid* Lode and *Modney* Drain, and old *Welney* River muſt be kept well ſcoured: and this is all I can think of for the *Weſt* Part of the *South* Level. But all theſe Banks and other Works will do nothing, except the *South* Bank of *Bedford* River be kept ſo high and ſo ſtrong, as to reſiſt a 7 or 8 Foot Water, from *Swacey* hard Lands to *Denver* Dam, where the new Saſs and old Saſs now is. And I hope the new Sluice of Eighteen Foot Water-way, and the two Sluices of Twelve Foot a-piece Water-way of either Side, will ſerve, if not, more Sluices may be added; and this is all I think can be done for the *South* Level, *in the way of draining by Sluices at* Denver *Dam: And therefore I muſt add this, That the better way of Draining this* South *Level, is by Banks without any Sluices at all at* Denver *Dam:* And this was ever my Opinion, according to the certain *Rule of Draining*, which is, *To imbank all Rivers and Brook-waters, and never to put Sluices upon ſuch Waters, who have a continual Body to preſerve their Channel or Outfall from the ſilting up by Tides.*

To drain the North Level.

For the Draining the *North* Level, the Drain on the *South* Side of the Dukes Lands in *Peterborough* great Fen, and ſo againſt the *Eaſt* Side of the ſaid Lands to *Pepper* Lake, and ſo to *Man's Houſe*, and then by the new *South Eea*, to *Clows-Croſs*, and ſo by Shire Drain to the Sea; *Thorney* Dike from *Catt-water* by *Willow-hill*, to as far as the Saſs in the *North* Bank of *Morton*'s Leam, and from thence by the Wides Stream through Marrow Common to *Clows-Croſs*, and ſo into the Shire Drain, the Bank and Drain to the Counter-waſh of the *North* Bank of *Morton*'s Leam to be continued; and the Sluices in the ſame Bank, juſt at *Guyhirn* Corner, to be continued as now they are; and Poſt Land Water may be taken in by the ſtrait Cut into the River *South Eea*. If the Banks of Poſt-land againſt *Welland* be maintain'd ſufficiently all round againſt the Waters of *Welland*, the Work propoſed of making a Bank from the *Weſt* End of *Croyland* to *Dowſdale* Houſe, is a Work of abſolute neceſſity; except you will take upon the Corporation the Imbanking againſt the Waters of *Welland*; from *Crowland* to *White-houſe* and *Brother-houſe*, and all againſt *Bell's* Moor to *Dowſdale*, I propoſe to be ſet on *Thorney* Side of the old *South Eea*. But all this will not preſerve the *North* Level, except the *North* Bank of *Morton*'s Leam, *Peakirk* Bank, from *Peakirk* Town to *Crowland* Town, and the Banks of *Weerington* Waters be ſubſtantially maintained, to reſiſt a Seven Foot Water: And this is all I can think of for the *North* Level.

Having according to your Commands repreſented unto you ſuch Ways and Means as ſhall come within my Underſtanding to propoſe to you, for the perfect Draining of the whole Level, and every part thereof, according as you may by the Act of Parliament, and as the Nature and Situation of the ſeveral Places thereof will permit; I leave it to your better Judgments to purſue them, or not, as you ſhall judge beſt.

Given under my Hand this 18th *of* May, 1682.

RICHARD GORGES.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS *made upon the Marſhes below the Four* Cambridge-ſhire Gotes, *of the Outfall of* Wisbich *River, and certain Creeks there,* &c. *By* Richard Atkins, June 1605.

(Confirms the Method propos'd to drain the *North* Level, *p.* 21, 22.)

A Skore of Clay the Preſervation of Marſhland.

Wisbech Channel falleth from the four *Gotes* Eaſtward, down by *Walpole* Marſhes on the *Eaſt* and *South*, to *Croſs-keys* Corner, alias *Gates-end* Corner; and from thence paſſeth towards *Terington* Bank, leaving to the Southward an high Skore of Clay, (the only Preſervation of the Town) *&c.* This Skore of Clay is about a Furlong broad, but by the fretting of the Sea daily waſteth; and the People of the Place not underſtanding what a Defence it is to their Country, continually bear away the ſame to the Repair of their Banks, never foreſeeing their preſent Deſtruction, if that Skore of Clay were once gone, and the Sea at the ordinary Depth of his Channel, ſuffered to come to the Foot of the Bank.

Lut. Leam.

Lutton Leam taketh its beginning at the four *Lincolnſhire Gotes*, viz. *Sutton Gote*, *Lutton Gote*, *Gedney Gote*, and *Fleet Gote*; and all theſe in one Channel run through *Sutton* Marſh, Eaſtward, into the *Maid's-Eye*, a Channel about ¼ of a Mile below *Terington* Bank, and ſo into *Blowdeep*; the upper Head next the Bank is called *Lutton Leam*; the Part below, the People of *Sutton*, and the Fiſhermen call it *Toms-mere*, and the Guides over the Waſhes call it the four Mile *Creek*.

A Creek falling into the Leam *from the Southward.*

A little from the *Gote* Eaſtward, on the *South* Side of *Lutton Leam*, about ¾ of a Mile below, falleth in a Creek called the old *Fleet*; and about half a Mile below, on the ſame Side, falleth in another Creek, called *Judgers-Creek*; and about a Mile and half below that, on the ſame Side, falleth in another Creek, call'd *Wolmers-Creek*; and about half a Mile and a Quarter, below them all, and the laſt that falleth in from the *South*, is *Kings-Creek*.

The old *Fleet* ſerved anciently to bring the Water from *Sutton* Fields, by a *Gote* of old, laid under the Sea-dike, almoſt againſt the Church, before the other *Gote* was laid.

Judger's Creek and *Wolmers Creek*, preſerved only to ſcour the Marſh.

Kings Creek.

Kings Creek is ſaid to be the ancient Outfall of *Wisbech* River: This Creek at the falling into *Tom*'s Mere, is about 10 or 12 Foot deep at the leaſt; *Tom*'s Mere is 14 or 15 Foot deep, and 50 or 60 Poles wide.

The Leam *how preſerved from ſilting.*

The Head of the four *Lincoln-ſhire Gotes* are preſerved, eſpecially in Summer, by two great Fens brought off the Marſhes, juſt to the Mouth of them, which in every Spring-Tide afford ſtore of Water to grind down the Channel, whereof that on the *North* Side is the moſt Principal: For the Conduction whereof, to the place of beſt Advantage the Leam is imbanked on that Side by ſome certain Space, that the Tide on the Marſh cannot fall into it, but by that Fin at the very Head, and there by its plentiful Deſcent, ſcoureth to good Purpoſe, that which otherwiſe in Summer would be ſilted up. Such Penury there is of freſh Waters in the Country at that time.

A View of the River of Wisbech, *from* Guyhirn *to the four* Gotes *of* King's-Creek, *&c. by the Commiſſioners of Sewers,* Auguſt 17. 1618.

Kings Creek.

ALſo we find that *King's Creek* would be the beſt and ſafeſt Outfall for conveyance of the freſh Waters to the Sea, if a new Channel were cut Line right from thence to the Shire *Gote*, whereby the Fen Countries might be drained, *&c.*

Shire Drain;

Alſo we find the Shire Drain which hath not run for a Year and more, to be a very fair Sewer: And that it will be made with the ſmalleſt Charge the beſt and certaineſt way to regain the ſurrounded Grounds about the Bank of *South Eea*;

Eea; and to preſerve the *North* Side of *Wisbech*: which Drain needeth only raiſing and ſtrengthning of the Banks, and bottoming in ſome Places.

S. Fane, Miles Sandys, O. Cromwell, Robert Bevill, John Cutts, S. Steward, Hen. Karvill, Hen. Cromwell, John Finchman, Rob. Butler, Euſeby Catesby.

Certain Obſervations made by G---B--- *touching the State of the Fens*, 1606. &c.

1. BY the Decay of Drains above 500,000 Acres of very fruitful Grounds are made unprofitable; and thereby 40,000 People greatly impoveriſhed. *The Decay of Sewers the drowning the Country, &c.*

2. Navigation is decayed, moſt of the Drains being not paſt a Foot and a Half deep; whereby no Paſſage is by Water in Summer from Place to Place, with Carriages and Merchandize, as heretofore.

3. The Breed of Fiſh is utterly deſtroy'd; for by reaſon of ſhallow Water; in Summer the Heat, and in Winter the Froſt and Cold, deſtroyeth all.

4. Hereby alſo the Outfalls to the Sea (all except *Lyn*, which is maintain'd by Rivers not made, but naturally grown) are utterly decayed, and without hope to be recovered, but only by the cleanſing of ſuch Drains as have taken Waters from the high Countries; by which Waters the Silt from the Sea, which annoyeth the Outfalls, have been avoided and kept back. *All the Outfall decayed, except* Lyn.

So that although the making Banks hath hurt theſe Fen Countries, as cannot be denied, being called in their Records *Purpreſtures*; yet by good Helps, and careful Means, the Countries were and may be preſerved; and that not by any means, but by the Maintenance of Drains and Sewers, by want whereof the great Decay is grown.

Therefore the King's Pleaſure is, that the Grounds ſurrounded ſhall be drained: And common good requireth it: The People and Inhabitants being by ſurrounding much afflicted, do heartily crave it. *The King's Pleaſure is to Drain the Fens.*

Now it reſteth how theſe Sewers are to be made? And it is certainly known, that in all Times paſt, there have been made and maintain'd by the Law of Sewers, and yet might, if they might be executed. Gladly therefore would the Inhabitants of thoſe Parts have the ſaid Laws executed, or have ſome Reaſons why it may not now be done by the ſaid Laws, as well as heretofore; or if they be not ſufficient that they may be amended.

The Grounds ſurrounded may be drained, and that by Drains; or by Drainings of Three Sorts. *How they may be drained.*

1. On the Face of the Soil, as the higher Part to the lower Part; which cannot be here, by reaſon of Banks between the Fens and the Grounds Imbanked.

2. By Trenches and Drains from an higher to a lower Ground, which hath been, and we think is the only way.

3. By forcing Water from an higher Ground to a lower, through a level Ground, by placing of Banks wherein to put the Water to increaſe his Fall.

To drain them, hath been, and will be, and may be done; and it is exceeding profitable, and it is pity but it ſhould be furthered: And to further this is an honourable Work, and full of Goodneſs.

Now it reſteth to be conſidered, whether the raiſing of Banks to ſuch height as to hold in the Waters from overflowing, be a Thing aimed at or no.

To keep it dry Winter and Summer, and to keep it from overflowing at all, is not poſſible. *To make them Winter Grounds impoſſible.*

To keep it from being overflown at all hindereth half the Profit.

It is proved by the Upland Meadows, and much more by the Fens, the Soil whereof is Moor, and utterly unfruitful, without much moiſture; this is to loſe certain Things for Uncertainties; and leave known ways to wander after Novelties, and do no good.

God knoweth what harm, beſides the general Offence to all the Fen Inhabitants. And in this Courſe none have overgained, except ſuch as have kept off the freſh Waters by Banks, and have had the Sea preſent for their Outfalls; and yet all theſe have drowned more than they have ſaved, and made their Gain by others Loſſes, *&c.*

Observations of the Flux and Reflux of the Tides at Lyn, *&c.*

Lyn, *Auguſt the* 8th, 1723.

H.	M.		F.	I.
08	22	High Water Tide flow'd in height	16	02
09	22	Tide Ebb'd back and ſunk	3	11
10	22		3	01½
11	22		3	00
12	22		2	05
1	22		2	00
2	22		0	07½
3	22		0	4

Knights-Gool, ditto.

06	59	Flood or Low-water.		
8	58	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	9	08
9	30	Kept flowing, but ſhrunk in that time	0	08
9	58	Tide Ebb'd back and ſunk	1	08
10	58		2	10
11	58		2	01
12	58		1	03
2	15		0	07
3	00		0	04
4	00		0	03

Magdalen Bridge, ditto.

7	32	Flood or Low-water.		
9	15	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	7	03
10	05	Kept flowing, but ſhrunk in that time	1	02
11	05	Tide Ebb'd back and ſunk	2	02
12	05		1	04¼
1	05		0	11
2	05		0	06
3	05		0	03¼
4	05		0	02
5	05		0	01¼

Salters-lode, ditto.

8	30	Flood or Low-water.		
9	55	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	3	01
11	50		1	04
1	00		0	09½
2	30		0	05¼
4	00		0	02
5	30		0	01¼

Mepall Bridge, ditto.

2	30	No Tide reach ſo far but the Water ſwell'd	0	03¾

N. B. This Tide ran through *Ely* Bridge, about three Miles up the River *Ouſe*, but did not near reach *Mepall*, up the 100 Foot, or new *Bedford* River.

Lyn, *Auguſt the* 22d, 1723.

H.	M.		F.	I.
5	20	Flood or Low-water.		
7	56	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	14	04
8	24	Kept flowing, but ſhrunk in that time	0	08
8	56	Tide Ebb'd back and ſunk	1	07
9	56		3	03
10	56		3	05
11	56		2	09
12	56		1	08
1	56		0	09
2	56		0	04

Knights-Gool, ditto.

6	45	Flood or Low-water.		
8	10	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	7	11
8	30	Kept flowing, but ſhrunk in that time	0	06
9	05	The Tide Ebb'd back and ſunk	1	11
10	04		3	00
11	20		1	00
12	19		0	09¼
1	18		0	04¾
2	30		0	04

Magdalen Bridge, ditto.

7	35	Flood or Low-water.		
9	10	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	5	07

Salters-lode, ditto.

8	22	Flood or Low-water.		
9	56	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	2	00
3	54	The Tide ebb'd back, and the Water was fallen	1	08

Denver Sluices, ditto.

8	23	Flood or Low-water.		
9	57	High-water, Tide flow'd in height	1	10

N. B. The Tide flow'd through the Remains of *Denver* Sluices toward *Ely*, one Hour after it had done flowing in Hundred Foot or new *Bedford* River.

N. B. There were ſeveral other Obſervations made, but we did not think it abſolutely neceſſary to Print them; theſe being ſufficient to ſhew the Deſcent of the River from *Salters-lode* to *Lyn*; and to prove, that the Obſtacle to Draining is above St. *Germans*.

Hence

Hence it appears that the Tide of Flood runs through *Lyn-haven* ordinarily 3 Hours, 4 Minutes.

The common Spring-Tides riſe in height in that time 14 Feet, four Inches; as was obſerv'd *Auguſt* 22. And it was obſerv'd at the ſame time, that in 4 Hours, 22 Minutes after the Tide firſt began to ebb back again to Sea, the Water was ſunk 12 Foot 6 Inches.

Therefore about 4 Hours returns the Water back again to Sea.

It was Slake-Tide at *Lyn* at 8 Hours, 24 Minutes; at *Salters-lode* at 10 Hours, 22 Minitutes: Therefore the Tide is about 2 Hours flowing from *Lyn* to *Salters-lode*.

At 10 Hours, 22 Minutes, the Tide was ebb'd back to Sea, and ſunk at *Lyn* 7 Foot 3 Inches; therefore by that time the Tide had done flowing at *Salters-lode*, it had ebb'd to Seaward at *Lyn*, and ſunk 7 Foot 3 Inches.

The Tide that is 2 Hours flowing to *Salters-lode*, is 2 Hours ÷ ebbing back; therefore by that time the ſaid Waters fall back to *Lyn*, it is 12 Hours 27 Minutes; at that time the Tide is ſunk at *Lyn* 12 Foot 1 Inch. The Height of the Slake Tide is but 13 Foot 6 Inches. Therefore here is in *Lyn-haven* but one Foot five Inches Water, higher than Low-water Mark, and conſequently is ſunk into the Compaſs of the Channel, before the Waters that had put up to *Salters-lode* get back to *Lyn* in their ebb to Seaward. It is not Low-water at *Lyn*, till after 6 Hours (or a Clock) at the time of this Obſervation. Therefore here are 5 Hours good for the Waters that were put up from Sea, beyond *Salters-lode*, to retreat back again, and the freſh Waters with them.

This is prov'd by Obſervation, *e. g.*

The Waters were all ebb'd back again from *Salters-lode*, by four a-Clock, the 22d of *Auguſt*.

It requires about two Hours for them to get to *Lyn*.

It is not Flood at *Lyn* till after ſix a-Clock.

Therefore all the Water that had put up from Sea, has time to get back before another Tide puts up.

And theſe Waters running out to Sea in the Compaſs of the Channel, ſcour out the Silt and Sand, and is the Means of keeping the Channel to Seaward open.

A Tide that flows in height 14 Foot 4 Inches at *Lyn*, flows 7 Foot 11 Inches at *Knights-Gool*, which is about ſix Miles up the River from *Lyn*; and the River between *Lyn* and *Knights-Gool* is in ſome places near a Mile wide. This Water does not begin to ebb back, till the Tide below *Lyn* is moſtly retreated to Sea; therefore this Water is a great Scourer and Preſervation of the Channel to Seaward.

Above *Knight's-Gool*, the River is not above 120 Foot wide.

At *Magdalen* this Tide riſes in height 5 Foot 7 Inches: Theſe Waters in their Reflux have ſome Action and Power to grind out the Silt and Sand below *Magdalen* to Seaward. But as the River at *Denver* is ſo choaked, that it could receive but one Foot, this ſmall Quantity is of no uſe toward ſcouring out the Sand; hence the River upward grows worſe and worſe. And now the Bottom of the River is higher than the Soil of the Fens, and conſequently the Fens are perpetually drowned.

The Adventurers ſay, That the width between *Germans* and *Lyn*, is the Cauſe of the River and Haven growing up, and the Deſtruction of their Draining. But that cannot be: For Low-water Mark at *Knights-Gool* is 5 Foot, 11 Inches lower than Low-water Mark at *Salters-lode*: Low-water Mark at *Salters-lode* is two Foot higher than the Soil of the Fens; Low-water Mark at *Knights-Gool*, is 3. 11 Inches lower than the Soil of the Fens. Therefore not the wide River from *Knight's-Gool* downward, hinders draining of the Fens, but the narrow River from *Knights-Gool* upwards. Therefore the Fens can never be drained till the River upwards be deepned. And as the River was choaked up while *Denver* Sluices were ſtanding, as well as it is now, ſince they are fall'n; it is demonſtrable, there is no way to deepen the River, but by giving the Waters their old Courſe, as propoſed in *Sect.* 8.

N. B. Before *Denver* Sluices were built, Low-water Mark in the River *Ouſe* at *Salters-lode*, was 10 Foot under the Surface of the Fens, (now two Foot above the

the Surface) therefore this Tide, *Auguſt* the 22d, which now riſes but two Foot, did then riſe 14 Foot, and fill all the Rivers above *Salters-lode*; all which Water returning to Sea in the Compaſs of the Channel, did grind out the Sand and Silt, and wear the Channel wider and deeper, till thoſe Sluices were built. And the River and Channel being ſo deep, the Land-floods had room to get to Sea in tolerable time, and did with their force wear the River and Channel wider and deeper every Winter, to the Improvement of Navigation and Draining. Therefore when the Land-floods have their ancient Courſe given them, they will in Conjunction with the Tides, grind out the Sand the River is choaked with; and after that, continue to wear it wider and deeper, as heretofore, to the future Improvement of Navigation and Draining.

An ABSTRACT *of ſuch Statutes as have been made for avoiding all Annoyances and Obſtructions in navigable Rivers.*

Magna Charta, Cap. 23. provides, That all Weres from thenceforth ſhall be utterly put down through all *England*, but only by the Sea Coaſts.

25 *Ed.* 3. *Cap.* 4. ſets forth, That whereas the common Paſſages of Boats and Ships in the great Rivers of *England* be oftentimes annoyed by Inhanſing Gores, Weres, Stakes, *&c.* in great damage of the People: It is eſtabliſhed, the ſame ſhall be cut and utterly pulled down, without being renewed. And that Writs be ſent to the Sheriffs to do Execution.

45 *Ed.* 3. *Cap.* 2. Reciting the Statute laſt mentioned; and that Ships and Boats were diſturbed, that they could not paſs as they were wont. And at the grievous Complaint of the Commons by their Petition, that the ſame Statute was not executed nor kept. It is eſtabliſhed, that the ſame Statute ſhall be kept. Joining thereto——That if any ſuch Annoyance be done, it ſhall be pulled down, *&c.* And he that ſhall repair the ſame, incur One Hundred Marks Penalty.

21 *Rich.* 2. *Cap.* 19. The ſame Statutes laſt above-mentioned, are recited, and again confirmed.

1 *Hen.* 4. *Cap.* 12. The ſame Statutes are again recited and confirmed in all Points. Joining thereto, That Commiſſioners ſhall be made to ſubſtitute Perſons to ſurvey and keep the great Rivers, and correct and pull down, and amend the Defaults, and to hear and determine, and make Decrees touching the ſame.

4 *Hen.* 4. *Cap.* 11. Reciting the ſaid Miſchiefs whereby the common Paſſage of Ships and Boats is diſturbed: It is enacted, That the former Statutes be holden and kept and put in due Execution. Joining to the ſame, That the Commiſſioners ſhall enquire thereof, and puniſh Offenders by Fines, at their Diſcretions.

12 *Edw.* 4. *Cap.* 7. ſets forth, That the former Statutes were made for the great Wealth of the Land, in avoiding the Streightneſs of all Rivers, ſo that Ships and Boats might have in them their large and free Paſſage. That ſuch Annoyances in Rivers are contrary to *Magna Charta* (upon which the great Sentence and Apoſtolick Curſe was pronounced againſt the Breakers of the ſame. And reciting the whole Tenors of all the ſaid former Statutes. And that contrary to theſe Statutes in diſturbance of the Paſſage of Ships, Barges, Boats, and other Veſſels, divers Locks, Weres, Stakes, Floodgates and Diſturbances were daily inlarged, to the great Damage of the King and his People. It is ordained, That all the ſaid former Statutes ſhall be duly obſerved and kept, joining thereto other great Penalties to the King and Informer.

23 *Hen.* 8. *Cap.* 5. Repeating the Damages and Loſſes by Gates, Floodgates, Locks, and other Impediments and Annoyances on Rivers, Streams, and Floods whereby the Paſſage of Ships and Boats be letted and interrupted. Directs the Form of the general Commiſſion of Sewers, whereby the Commiſſioners have

Power to cauſe ſuch Annoyances and Impediments to be corrected, put down, or reformed according to the afore-mentioned Statutes. And to proſtrate and overthrow the ſame, with large Powers to make Laws and Ordinances, and compel Obedience thereunto: Reviving and confirming all the ſaid former Statutes in all Points.

3 *Edw.* 6. *Cap.* 8. The laſt mentioned and former Statutes, confirmed and made perpetual.

43 *Eliz. Cap.* 11. An Act paſſed for Draining great part of this Level, wherein Proviſion was made that it ſhould not extend to the Draining any Lands, whereby, or by Means whereof, any of the Havens or Ports of this Realm, may in any ſort, be annoyed, impared or hindered, nor any Grounds in ſix Miles of *Lyn*.

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11 *Hen.* 7. *Cap.* 5. That every Man may pull down Weers in *Southampton* Rivers.

18 *Hen.* 8. *Cap.* 13. The ſame made perpetual.

19 *Hen.* 7. *Cap.* 18. For preſerving the Paſſage of Boats and Veſſels in the River *Severn*.

7 *Hen.* 8. ——— For preſerving *Canterbury* Rivers.

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27 *Hen.* 8. *Cap.* 23. For preſerving Havens in *Devon* and *Cornwall*.

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